

# THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

OCTOBER 1923.

## DR. JOHNSON AS A PHILOSOPHER.

SPEAKING of Bacon's Essays, Sir Joshua Reynolds, in an unfinished 'Discourse' he has left us on Johnson's influence (M. ii. 229),<sup>1</sup> says that Dr. Johnson was of opinion that 'their excellence and their value consisted in being the observations of a strong mind operating upon life.' Johnson's judgment of Bacon may be applied to himself, and more aptly describes his claims to be considered a philosopher than any attempt to rank him as a philosopher in the strict sense of the term. His qualifications to that title are of the slightest; he is rather the wise man or sage than the philosopher.

For philosophy has a strict and a vague sense. In the special and proper sense, it is a science more or less systematic dealing with certain ultimate questions about the nature of things, as has been illustrated from Plato down to Mr. Bradley in our own days by all the great philosophers. Johnson was very little of a philosopher in this stricter sense. Carlyle has at the end of his famous essay on Boswell compared Johnson and his contemporary Hume, calling them the two great half-men of their time, complementary to each other. Now Hume *was* a philosopher and in the first rank. Johnson on the other hand was not.

But in the vaguer sense of the word he was eminently a strong mind operating upon life and as full of wisdom as he was of essential goodness. He has sometimes been compared to Socrates, and I shall return presently to the comparison. But Socrates, though he was all that Johnson was, a very wise and strong mind, was a strict philosopher—we should now say a professional philosopher—as well, or in the first place, and it is doing him less than justice to think of him only as a very able and stimulating thinker, as all readers of Messrs. Burnet and Taylor now are aware. Johnson was like one-half of Socrates. Perhaps in our own time the nearest parallel to him is Jowett, who was a devoted Johnsonian by some

<sup>1</sup> References are to the *Life* (L.) and the *Johnsonian Miscellanies* (M.) in the editions of Birkbeck Hill, to whose labours all my gratitude is owing.

sense of affinity—Johnsonianissimus Birkbeck Hill calls him, in the dedication of his edition of Boswell, quoting Boswell's word. *Jowett was hardly, I may even say in no way, a philosopher in the strict sense.* In his introductions to the Dialogues of Plato you will find in a *high degree the operations of a strong mind* upon life, acuteness, largeness of view, over and above the charm of a delicate but vague style; but you will find no real feeling for metaphysics, nor any profound insight into the mind of Plato. He appears rather to think of Plato as a highly gifted man groping vaguely in the theory of ideas, or, in the later doctrines of the *Sophist*, vaguely and ingeniously and fantastically involved in the difficulties and entanglements of his problems, offering rather illuminating observations about them, than what Plato actually gives us—the intensest insight which speculation has ever possessed into the nature of things. It may indeed be doubted whether Jowett really believed in philosophy for its own sake, or except as a form of wisdom. He rather restrained the enthusiasm of his pupils than incited it. Once when on returning from a vacation I told him that I had been reading Hegel (I must have said all Hegel), he said: 'It's a great thing to have read the whole of Hegel; but now that you have read him I advise you to forget him again.' No one who believed in philosophy could have said that, whatever view he took of the positive merits or demerits of Hegel. Unfortunately I believe I took his advice in large part and have ever since regretted doing so. On another occasion he said: 'It's extraordinary what an attraction metaphysics seems to possess for certain minds; it's like falling in love; but you get over it after a time.' There seems to be some doubt whether Jowett ever fell into love. I think he certainly did not fall into metaphysics. This is written with no thought of belittling him, which would ill become a pupil who fell under his influence and remembers with gratitude his genuine kindness. It is not for his philosophy that we remember him with gratitude, but for the qualities which he shared with Johnson, his humour, his clear and vigorous intellect, his power of direct vision of things, his love of truth and hatred of insincerity and sentiment, his largeness of mind, his love of goodness, his real piety and his sound sense of the value of material things, perhaps also his prejudices whether we shared them or not—such as his dislike of Thackeray and Carlyle (how glad, he said at breakfast one morning when we told him from the newspapers that there was some apprehension that the comet then visible might collide with the earth and set us on

fire, how glad Mr. Carlyle would have been if he could have been alive to know this); and more than all, notwithstanding his depreciation of enthusiasms, his steady encouragement of his pupils to pursue knowledge wherever their tastes led them. He would have agreed with Johnson's statement somewhere that all knowledge was of value. Asking one of his pupils one day after graduation what his age was, he said gravely and kindly: 'You have thirty or forty years before you of reading and writing.' The pupil remembers sadly how ill he has justified the prediction, to which he listened then and remembers still with so warm an emotion.

### I.

In the imaginary University which Boswell one day suggested should be set up by the Club at St. Andrews, Johnson, after first saying 'I'll trust theology to nobody but myself,' on second thoughts left practical divinity to Percy and chose for himself logic, metaphysics, and scholastic divinity (L. v. 109). It may be suspected that there would have been more divinity than metaphysics. In 'Prayers and Meditations,' No. 27 (M. i. 17), there is a prayer 'on the study of philosophy, as an instrument of living'—a significant description of what philosophy meant for him—but even then he adds, 'This study was not pursued.' In the Preface to the English Dictionary he writes, referring to subtle distinctions of meaning, 'Many of the distinctions which to common readers appear useless and idle will be found real and important by men versed in the school philosophy, without which no dictionary can ever be accurately compiled or skilfully examined.' But this is probably not to be understood as a claim to be himself considered deeply versed in that subject.

To judge from his conversations and writings, his treatment of philosophical topics testifies rather to the strength of his general powers than to any special philosophical gift. The most famous incident of all suggests the absence of any such gift. Boswell had said of Berkeley's 'ingenious sophistry to prove the non-existence of matter and that everything in the universe is merely ideal' (both statements inaccurate) 'that the doctrine could not be refuted, though we are satisfied it is not true. Johnson answered, striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone till he rebounded from it, "I refute it thus." Johnson's *argumentum ad lapidem*, of course, only showed that the stone was different from and offered resistance to his body, and was irrelevant

to the doctrine that both stone and body were ideas. If it proved anything it proved that Johnson had not understood and was probably too unspeculative to understand Berkeley's point. That the doctrine left the practical nature of things unaltered, Johnson might have learnt from a parallel incident in Molière. In the delightful foolery called 'The Compulsory Marriage' (*Le Mariage Forcé*) the old man Sganarelle, having doubts of his wisdom in proposing to marry his young ward, goes to consult two philosophers, one of whom is the sceptic philosopher Marphurius, whom he tells he has come to consult him in the matter. 'You must please amend,' says Marphurius, 'this way of speaking. Our philosophy orders us to pronounce no decisive proposition, to speak of everything with uncertainty, always to suspend one's judgment; and therefore you ought not to say I have come but it appears to me that I have come.' Sganarelle can, of course, get no satisfaction out of the sceptic, and at last is provoked into beating him. Marphurius cries out 'Commit such an outrage on me, beat a philosopher like me!' and Sganarelle replies 'Please amend this way of speaking. Everything must be doubted; and you ought not to say that I beat you but that it seems to you that I beat you.' 'Ah,' says Marphurius, 'I shall go to the magistrate and complain of the blows you have given me.' Sganarelle washes his hands of the affair; but Marphurius is right. For though everything is apparent, the apparent judge will condemn Sganarelle to apparent confinement with a diet of apparent porridge and skilly.

Johnson's mind was much occupied with philosophical problems, and even where he shrank from certain questions like freewill or death, Boswell gave him no peace from them. It is doubtless true, as Boswell and others have observed, that his attitude was determined largely by his theological beliefs or his political prejudices, which he held with the sturdiest pertinacity and did not wish to be disturbed in them. They stood in the way of any deep probing of the questions, such as the metaphysician with his equally pertinacious freedom from prejudice requires. He had no eye for the significance of Rousseau's doctrine of society and the state. It offended his conviction of the necessity of subordination of ranks, and disgusted him as an upholder of customary virtue: 'Rousseau, Sir, is a very bad man. I would sooner sign a sentence for his transportation than that of any felon who has gone from the Old Bailey these many years' (L. ii. 12). He laughed at his preference of the savage state; and he was blind to all that has made Rousseau an inspiration in his own time and



in our own. He thought that Rousseau talked nonsense and knew that he did. 'Why, Sir, a man who talks nonsense so well must know that he is talking nonsense' (L. ii. 74).<sup>1</sup> But he has in mind chiefly the earlier writings, and perhaps he exaggerated because of Boswell's infatuation for Rousseau.

He had no inkling of what Hume was to mean for subsequent philosophy, or if he did he only saw its disruptive character. A real philosopher was needed to appreciate that, and he was not found till the end of the century, and Johnson was content to acclaim Beattie. What he saw in Hume was, as he thought, the opponent of orthodox Christianity, and it must be remembered that even Adam Smith was afraid to publish the 'Dialogues on Natural Religion' which Hume had bequeathed to his care. He declared that everything which Hume had advanced against Christianity had passed through his own mind before, and he urged (L. i. 444) that 'after a system is well settled upon positive evidence a few partial objections ought not to shake it.' In familiar words: 'There are objections against a plenum and objections against a vacuum; yet one of them must certainly be true.' And against the essay on miracles all he could urge was that 'although God has made nature to operate by certain fixed laws, yet it is not unreasonable to think He may suspend those laws in order to establish a system highly advantageous to mankind,' such as he profoundly believed Christianity to be. Accordingly for him 'Hume and other sceptical innovators are vain men and will gratify themselves at any expense. Truth will not afford sufficient food to their vanity; so they have betaken themselves to error. Truth, Sir, is a cow which will yield such people no more milk and so they are gone to milk the bull.' Vanity enough Hume had; but there was more in him than vanity.

But though Johnson did not possess the speculative mind, his strong intellect fills his discussion of such questions with sound and wise observations which may be generally accepted, and with pointed and acute criticism of the deficiencies of others. At the end of 'Rasselas' there is talk of the immateriality of the soul, and the astronomer urges that the soul may be material, for matter may have qualities with which we are unacquainted. To which the prince's mentor Imlac, who may be taken to represent Johnson himself, returns, 'He who will determine against that which he knows, because there may be something which he knows not;

<sup>1</sup> He added: 'But I am afraid' (chuckling and laughing) 'Monboddie does not know that he is talking nonsense.'

he that can set hypothetical possibility against acknowledged certainty, is not to be admitted among reasonable beings.' Your modern philosopher insists after Leibniz that bare possibilities are nothing. Johnson makes a distinction between satisfaction and happiness to show that not all who are happy are equally happy. 'A peasant and a philosopher may be equally *satisfied* but not equally *happy*. Happiness consists in the multiplicity of agreeable consciousness. A peasant has not capacity for equal happiness with a philosopher' (L. ii. 9). Plato had said something of the same sort before him, and J. S. Mill draws a similar distinction, not quite the same, in a famous passage of the 'Utilitarianism,' where he says it is better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied. (Supposing the pig and Socrates were equally satisfied, Socrates would have the greater happiness.) The trouble is that Johnson with all this insight leaves the matter there and goes no further.

One of the questions which Boswell was always agitating was that of freewill. Once Johnson said impatiently 'Sir, we know the will is free and there's an end on't.' On a more favourable occasion (L. iii. 291) he talked more freely, summing up by saying 'All theory is against the freedom of the will; all experience is for it,' a judgment repeated in our time by Henry Sidgwick. Boswell's difficulty was the familiar one, how to reconcile freewill with God's foreknowledge. Johnson urges that 'you are surer that you are free than you are of prescience. But let us consider a little the objection from prescience. . . . If I am well acquainted with a man, I can judge with great probability how he will act in any case, without his being restrained by my judging. God may have this probability increased to certainty.' All sound good sense; but it does not carry us very far. Boswell even congratulates himself on finding Johnson 'so mild in discussing a question of the most abstract nature, involved with theological tenets which he generally would not suffer to be in any degree opposed.' Johnson was on the way to the view of freewill which regards a man as willing freely whose will is determined from within himself. But he adopts neither the plenum nor the vacuum. He could not trace freewill like Spinoza to our ignorance that we were determined; nor like Hume treat willing as like all other causality; nor could he boldly assert man to be a centre of indetermination, as Mr. Bergson was to maintain at a later day. What was enough for practical life was enough for him. To go deeper was to probe mysteries which for him were closed.

The best known, and Boswell says the best, of Johnson's minor writings was a review of Soame Jenyns's 'Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil.' From Johnson's account Jenyns seems to have adopted more or less the easy optimism of Pope's 'Essay on Man,' and he writes of the book much what he afterwards wrote on the Essay in the 'Life' of Pope. He points out the vagueness and difficulties of the conception of a scale of being continued up to God in which man has his proper place. Jenyns had not the advantage of Pope's genius of expression to make up for the weakness of his argument. Like Pope's, his attempts to justify evil were in themselves insufficient at the best.

For my own part I do not think that Pope at any rate deserves all the charges of superficiality that are brought against his poem ; it does not owe everything to its felicity of style. But when all is said, its optimism is too facile, and it had little chance with Johnson, and Jenyns's Inquiry still less. Johnson had the gloomy temperament which did not suffer him to endure solitude, and drove him to seek relief from his own thoughts in the society of his clubs. He was all his life oppressed by disease and melancholy ; and more than all, he had known the misery of extreme poverty. He had spent nights walking about London streets, because neither he nor his companion Savage had money enough to buy a night's lodging in a cellar—though indeed Johnson affected at a later day that they had not been depressed ; and when he was drudging for Cave he had signed one of his letters to his master *impransus*—dinnerless. The revolt against the spirit of optimism which had been provoked in Voltaire by the earthquake at Lisbon was provoked in Johnson by inherited temper and bitter experience. Johnson was, says Boswell (L. iv. 300), decidedly for the balance of misery in life upon the whole ; although Tom Tyers seems to say he held the opposite (M. ii. 360). One of his poems ends with the words, 'And screen me from the ills of life.' In its earlier form it had been stronger and Boswell says more Johnsonian : 'Hide me from the sight of life.' In the passage which concludes the 'Vanity of Human Wishes' on what a man may pray for, he writes :

'These goods for man the laws of Heaven ordain,  
These goods he grants who grants the power to gain ;  
With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,  
And makes the happiness she does not find.'

When he recited his own lines on the misery of the scholar's lot,

he burst into tears. 'Rasselas' and 'Candide' are on the same theme. But the first is suffused with an atmosphere of gloom.

Johnson could not bear to think of evil, and arguments to explain evil away were likely to weigh little with him. Jenyns committed himself to an outrageous proposition that perhaps our misery makes sport or gives utility to beings higher in the scale of existence, as the death of animals serves our happiness. Johnson's melancholy did not dry up his inexhaustible humour, and he annihilates Jenyns in prosecuting this idea in a passage which is too long to quote, though it is an admirable example of Johnson's better style, but of which I cannot deny myself the pleasure of citing one paragraph :

'One sport the merry malice of these beings has found means of enjoying to which we have nothing equal or similar. They now and then catch a mortal proud of his parts, and flattered either by the submission of those who court his kindness, or the notice of those who suffer him to court theirs. A head thus prepared for the reception of false opinions and the projection of vain designs they easily fill with idle notions, till they make their plaything an author : their first diversion commonly begins with an ode or an epistle, then rises perhaps to a political irony, and is at last brought to its height by a treatise on philosophy. Then begins the poor animal to entangle himself in sophisms, and flounder in absurdity, to talk confidently of the scale of being and to give solutions which he himself confesses impossible to be understood. Sometimes, however, it happens that their pleasure is without much mischief. The author feels no pain, but while they are wondering at the extravagance of his opinion and pointing him out to one another as a new example of human folly, he is enjoying his own applause and that of his companions and perhaps is elevated with the hope of standing at the head of a new sect.'

Vastly amusing all this is, and Johnson has an easy victory. But we learn little from his shrewd criticism of the weaknesses of Pope and his follower, except that optimism and pessimism alike, whether in a Panerace or a Johnson, are the reflection in the main of different temperaments, and that if it is folly to deny the reality of evil, its positive reality, it is as hard to reconcile life with the excess of misery as to reconcile misery with the wise benevolence of God.

S. ALEXANDER.

(To be continued.)

### THE CENTAUR.

At dawn the gardeners found him, fast asleep  
 Under the lilacs, where the grass grew deep,  
 Child of a race more ancient than their own,  
 And strange to them. His boyish face was brown,  
 And brown the slender arms and shoulders bare ;  
 An oak wreath was entangled in his hair ;  
 The creature had not grown to his full strength,  
 Pathetic in his coltish clumsiness, his length  
 Of legs that still might tremble under him  
 If his dam led him far afield. A whim  
 Had brought him down from the primeval hills  
 Of dear Arcadia, where the happy rills  
 Have each a nymph, and nesting birds can hear  
 Pan's voice and laughter, and his piping clear  
 At dawn and dusk in Spring. But no one cared  
 To know from whence he came or how he fared  
 Who was born free. His smiling innocent eyes,  
 When he awoke, aroused no memories  
 In their dull breasts.

There was, near by, a well  
 Within the garden, and, as no rain fell  
 Through the long months of summer, water drawn  
 From thence kept all the flowers fresh, the lawn  
 Green as in April ; but the horse was dead  
 That worked the heavy pulleys overhead.  
 Might not this other, coming there by chance,  
 The centaur, trustful in his ignorance,  
 Serve in his place ? So he was led away,  
 Broken of senseless mirth and foolish play,  
 Enslaved. The iron bucket falling—splash !  
 Mocked at his thirst ; he winced under the lash,  
 As, harnessed to the wheel, his tired face wet,  
 His thin young flanks heaving, and streaked with sweat,  
 Hour after hour he trudged, because he must,  
 Moving, half-blinded, through a cloud of dust.

At night he lay, shut in by bolts and bars,  
On rotting straw ; he never saw the stars ;  
He missed the sound of rustling in the brake  
At dusk, the hour when furry things awake,  
And fireflies dance among the flowering trees ;  
He slept alone who had been friends with these,  
In rayless gloom, until the east grew grey,  
And he was harnessed for another day.  
Months passed and years, and he grew dull. His lot  
Seemed almost tolerable. He forgot  
What life had promised and left unfulfilled,  
And all his dreams were like well water spilled,  
Until she came.

He chanced to be alone  
At noon while all his tyrants slept. A stone,  
A little stone flung by a friendly hand,  
Dropped from his side. He looked. He dared not stand,  
But straining on he turned his head to see  
Beyond the wall, the garden's boundary,  
One like himself, but with a woman's breast,  
White and flower-soft. And—'Do you never rest ?'  
As he trudged by a swarm of stinging flies  
Teased his bent back and buzzed about his eyes.  
'Are you not one of us ?' she said at last.  
The rusty chain clanked louder as he passed  
And she watched, pitying, for a while, and then  
Hearing the gardener coming with his men,  
Shook back her hair, and went off, cantering  
Swift as the wind, the happy woodland thing.  
He felt strange longings then and a new pain  
Tormenting him until she came again  
Down from the forest on the mountain side,  
The cool green glades where Pan's last followers hide.  
As he toiled on, pale in the scorching heat  
Of noon, she called to him. Her voice was sweet,  
A wooing voice. He listened eagerly,  
But shook his head. 'The flowers I tend would die  
If they lacked water.' Though some memory stirred  
Within him as he looked at her, and heard  
Of pastures and of thickets far above,



Remote from men, where such as they might love,  
And wander, free, or build themselves a home  
Of pine tree boughs and fern, he would not come.

Sadly she went—she, who had never known  
The yoke or felt the lash. She went alone.  
The wind blew on her with a chilly breath,  
A hovering kite reminded her of death ;  
And her heart seemed a stone—if stones can ache—  
So heavy was she for that other's sake.  
She paused awhile upon a cliff's sharp edge,  
And saw below, fringed by tall reeds and sedge,  
The boulders marking a dried river's course  
And scattered bones where lately a wild horse  
Had tried to leap the chasm, and had failed,  
Falling midway. Death everywhere ! She paled ;  
And yet, she thought, she would have chosen that end  
Rather than his whom she had left to spend  
His strength in bondage. Grieving, she passed on  
By ways untrodden of men, until she won  
The highest slopes, where oak gave place to pine  
And no flowers grew but the bright celandine,  
And resting there until the sunset burned  
Low in the west, she heard him following, turned  
To see him, trailing broken harness, young,  
Flushed, radiant.

And heart to heart they clung,  
And cared not that to-morrow, in the plain  
The gardeners would toil, for lack of rain,  
Drawing themselves the water from the well.

MORAY DALTON.

### WITH THE GOLD-SEEKERS IN NEW GUINEA.

FROM out the dark mists of time has come down to mankind the belief that the possession of gold renders one immune from all the worries and troubles which beset earthly existence. That belief is perhaps stronger to-day than ever, for it is evident that even a nation's credit depends upon its actual holding of gold—a metallic element of no particular value when compared with iron, copper, molybdenum, or many other substances—and, as mortals still value all they own of the earth's products in their gold equivalent, that metal is likely to remain king until transmuted in the final furnace.

Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand yet have their allurements for the gold-seeker; but it is now to New Guinea that the real prospector directs his attention, and in that great tropical island of unknown mountains and forests, of hostile natives and deadly fevers, he can still pan out from the sands of the rivers and creeks all his requirements. And the hope of sudden fortune is ever present.

There were forty of us working a patch on one of the fields on the Mambare River, and all were on 'good' gold, as the term is when it is more than payable. The field grew into a sort of township, a Warden was appointed, and an attempt made to collect taxes for the Commonwealth Government. The last reminded us too much of the alleged advantages of civilisation, and the miners 'rolled up' to protest against being civilised against their will. As a result, six of us left to see what was on the other side of a mountain range we could see from the tree-tops when we climbed aloft. Those six, including the writer, were known as Big Sam, the Professor, the Inventor Fellow, Silent Ted, Mac, and Sydney Charlie; but the writer is not Mac, as, possibly, might be inferred. We were well equipped, and were accompanied by eight 'boys,' picked from the best of the half-civilised natives who come up from the coast to sell their services wherever the white men gather. They bore names which they were proud of—their leader, for some reason or other, being known as the Archbishop.

A few hours after we set out the Warden issued orders that no

white men were to go into the ranges, as the natives were hostile, and conflict with them in their own domain must be avoided. He was acting under instructions from the Commonwealth Government of Australia, which certainly protects the interests of the natives, although it seldom gives any attention to the protests of the prospectors who suffer from their depredations. But, happening to know about the order in time, we were beyond recall when it was issued, and promptly forgot all that we wanted to concerning it.

Our first day's journey was through country fairly well known, but towards evening we had begun to cut our way through the dense entanglements of wild vine creepers and other undergrowths. We could have followed a native pad, but as it would only lead us to the nearest native village, and it was gold, not trade, we were after, we prepared to break new ground. That night we camped on the bank of a fair-sized river, and endeavoured to evade the attentions of mosquitoes and other pests by sitting in the pungent smoke of our fire. The night was oppressively hot, and the impenetrable scrub around shut out the air. The Inventor Fellow at length went out amid stream to some rocks and discovered that a current of air was blowing down the waterway. He had just announced this fact to his comrades when two large crocodiles, snapping at him from opposite sides of his foothold, caused him to rejoin those sweltering in the smoke, hurriedly. After that incident all sought the protection of their mosquito nets and did their best to sleep, some ashes carefully scattered around each net being the only guard against inquisitive snakes.

An hour before dawn the chattering of the birds awoke all who had slumbered unconscious of the attention of the diminutive jigger flea, and, while breakfast was being prepared by the Professor and Silent Ted, Big Sam and Mac examined the sands of the river. A shout from them brought the Inventor Fellow and Sydney Charlie to their aid, and in half an hour about six ounces of gold were panned out from a few yards of sand. After breakfast, tests made up and down for about a hundred yards proved that the alluvial gravel was highly auriferous, but this fact only filled us with an intense desire to find out where the gold originated, and we proceeded upstream.

A week later we were still following the twisting stream, but we were now in the heart of the ranges which formed the foothills of the Owen Stanleys, and the culminating summit of Mount

Scratchley could be seen frequently from clearings and from the tree-tops. We could not get away from gold; it showed us a yellow 'tail' in every pan we washed, and, occasionally, small specks about the size of a pin-head formed the major part, sure indication that we were nearing the mother lode.

One evening, after having camped early, Big Sam, who had gone out with the intention of replenishing our larder, returned with only one wild pig.

'It wasn't worth wasting a bullet on that,' commented Sydney Charlie. 'What's gone wrong with you?'

'I didn't shoot at all, Charlie; I got that fellow in a trap meant for us,' Sam answered, lighting his pipe with a burning log. 'I came back, quickly, to tell that we're just a few hundred yards off a stockaded village, and the people know we're coming and have set all the usual traps for us. There's a pad back there through the scrub which runs parallel with the river, and warriors have been following us all day on it.'

'Anything for a quiet life,' grunted Mac, examining his rifle; 'it's a vera good thing we don't know anything about the Warden's orders to avoid conflict!'

'Discretion is really often the better part of valour,' observed the Professor, 'but we cannot leave this gold; we must get past the village, some way.' He, too, tried the mechanism of his Winchester, and then began to unscrew the joints of his butterfly net handle.

Silent Ted, as usual, said nothing, but he saw that his revolvers were in working order. All had been in trouble with the natives before, but we had imagined that by conforming to their laws, which we knew fairly well, we would not be molested.

'I see the Archbishop has just discovered that danger is near,' the Inventor Fellow remarked; 'I expect he thinks we'll all be eaten to-night. The tribes up here are really gluttons when they catch coast boys. They stuff them with yams and roast them slowly, alive, but they always kill a white man before eating him.'

'Please stop!' cried the Professor; 'you'll put me off my supper to-night. But I'll rather suffer from indigestion myself than be the means of causing the poor ignorant cannibals to experience unpleasant dreams. What is it, Archbishop?'

'Him tink white fellows should make back tracks mighty quick and lively,' the chief carrier said. 'Him's boys no like make tucker for Papangi warriors. Old Broken Nose their chief.'

Much more was said, and it was clear that our carriers would desert us unless we acted promptly—fierce warrior tribes of the interior being the greatest terror known to the weaker civilisation-spoiled coast boys. We knew, however, that we would not be rushed until the natives had worked themselves up into a frenzy, and that, we calculated, would allow us time for supper in peace. An hour later we had rigged up our mosquito nets, piled on enough dry timber on our fire to last till morning, and crossed the river. The negotiation of the swiftly flowing water was not effected easily, and we nearly lost two carriers who were swept off their feet; but eventually we were all lying amidst some scrub, smoking, and awaiting things happening on the other side. The boys, meanwhile, repeated all the prayers they had been taught at their mission station, with strange embellishments not very appropriate had they understood what they were saying. In time four of us fell asleep, and Mac and Silent Ted kept watch. Some time about midnight Ted touched each sleeper and pointed across the water. Our fire was blazing and some surrounding undergrowths had also caught fire, and in the flickering shadows behind were a score or more war-bedecked savages, armed with clubs and spears. They were evidently surprised at finding the camp asleep without any guard, and they moved from tree to tree hesitatingly, as if suspecting some white men's magic to overwhelm them suddenly. But the white men, on the safe side of the river, were not the type to pull a trigger unless in absolute self-defence, and finally, growing bolder, some of the warriors advanced towards the fire and hurled spears into each net. Then, shrieking like demons, they fled, and the awakened birds made night hideous with their startled cries.

'Poor ignorant creatures!' remarked the Professor. 'They think they have killed us, and doubtless anticipate a celebration feast in the village to-morrow.'

'Yes,' laughed Big Sam; 'they fancy we'll go well with yams and sweet potatoes, but I reckon they'll not need to send for us.'

Nor did they; in the morning we packed up our belongings and followed the pad into the village, our boys following us simply because they were afraid of being left behind. When we climbed the bamboo stockade we were ready for trouble, but meant to show that we were friendly disposed and merely wished to pass through unmolested. We didn't get the chance of making friends, however; the village was deserted, and there were signs that its

population had left in a hurry. The tapoo house—the edifice regarded as sacred—was a very imposing-looking structure, with a carved and burnt-out wooden monstrosity surmounting its thatched roof which resembled no god we knew in the native calendar. There were about fifty other houses, some built on piles, and all with woven fibre walls. We feared a trap, but passed through and over the stockade on the other side safely, touching nothing, although greatly tempted to annex some hens and help ourselves to vegetable produce from the gardens. We carried the White Man's burden of responsibility for our actions, as most gold-seekers do.

When we joined the river again we found the gold in the sands even richer than before, but we did not care to wash out gold within spear-throw of the mysterious city, and passed on.

Progress was slow, and we expected to be rushed any moment; but night found us camped in a position we could easily defend, and, after settling our hours of keeping guard, we dined on tinned meat and the water of the stream, dispensing with a cooking fire.

The Inventor Fellow and Mac explored around for a bit in the bright moonlight instead of sleeping, and suddenly came on a bark canoe drawn up on the bank. Then they had an idea, simultaneously. Pushing the canoe into the water, they drifted down stream to camp and told Ted, who was on guard, their plans, knowing he wouldn't tell unless necessary. Then they resumed their journey and floated down to the village. It was now alive with warriors and illuminated with torches, and some musicians were producing strange sounds from long tubular wooden, snakeskin-covered drums. The two adventurers grounded their canoe and went ashore to pay their respects; their weapons were in thorough order. Mac shouted out a salutation, and the effect was miraculous. With yells of terror the mighty warriors, the musicians, and all others who could run, fled, and only the fat, grotesquely garbed tapoo men (priests), who evidently had been dining very well and couldn't easily run, were left. They were frantic, but it was clearly not the fear of two men with rifles that was the cause. They stood huddled together, and shrieked out strange words and made signs which could not be mistaken as meaning 'Go away!'—'Don't come near!'—'Take everything!'

Mac thought he would like some explanation, and he got it. High above the other words sounded the scream 'Flu!'



The mystery was solved. The natives had heard of the dreaded influenza which was killing off the people on the coast, and they thought the white men carried it as they did their magic. The chief now returned, apparently somewhat ashamed at leaving the tapoo men to face the unknown danger, and the Inventor Fellow recognised him as a notorious character who had been caught while raiding the big gold-mining camp with his warriors. He had promised to be friendly in future, and was given presents and allowed to depart. He knew some English, having been partly civilised by the missionaries before he reverted to his evil ways and became a chief by killing those who stood in his way.

'Hullo, Broken Nose!' the Inventor Fellow called out. 'We are friends—no' got flu—want tucker (food)—we pay for it.'

Broken Nose believed that the gold-seeker does not lie—the natives discriminate between the gold-seeker and others!—and, shouting out reassuring words to his people, he rushed forward and gripped the fists of the intruders.

'Hims mighty glad see you,' he said. 'What you give hims?'

'We'll give hims tobacco, matches, and a bottle of Eno's fruit salt,' Mac answered; and all was well. Incidentally, the Inventor Fellow also gave the chief an old pipe which had been burnt out.

When morning broke two canoes, laden with native produce, were grounded about fifty yards below our camp, and the Inventor Fellow and Mac were carrying out their duties as guards. Their absence had not been detected, but the Professor and Big Sam were very angry when told about it, the latter because he had not been one of the visiting party. Silent Ted never said a word. Our stores were replenished, and Broken Nose had imparted the information that there was 'mighty big lot o' gold up river in ghost-mountain, but bad warriors there kill an' eat everybody.'

We didn't fear ghosts, and we thought we could evade being the chief items of a banquet; and a few days later, after passing through forests of teak, seeing orchids the Professor couldn't name, and birds of paradise and parrots which seemingly did not fear us, we emerged from the dense vegetation and found ourselves flanked by high walls of fern-covered rock, and high up among the ranges. A trial of the sands at the gully entrance showed that Broken Nose had spoken truth, and we plunged into the cool dark ravine and forged ahead. The stream had now become much smaller, but deep, almost stagnant, pools occurred frequently which filled the entire passage, and which were alive with saurians

of enormous size. Reptiles of all kinds, too, were very abundant, and some were too lazy to get out of our way ; but bird life had almost ceased. The walls contracted still further, and in two days the channel between had narrowed down to only about a hundred feet, and the water had come to an end in a circular pool at the base of a sheer rock which closed in the gully. To proceed was impossible, and the only way out was by the route we had entered. But we did not desire to explore any more. We had located the reef which had shed the gold we had been following, and it promised well. It was a belt of iron-stained quartz about ten feet in width, which extended vertically up the rocky wall that closed us in as far as we could see. Doubtless a waterfall denuded the quartz of its soft auriferous contents during the rainy season, and the stream we had followed, as its high-level water-mark indicated, would then be a raging torrent which would carry the gold far in its downward course towards the Mambare or Kumussi rivers. We did not know which, and didn't particularly care.

We found a cave opening off a ledge in the rocks about twenty feet above the pool, and this we made our camp, after blasting a track to it which we could easily defend. Then we settled down to work systematically. We built a sluice-box with bark, and the Inventor Fellow made riffles out of pieces of split bamboo, which he laid transversely across the long, inclined bark channel until it resembled a gigantic washing-board. Silent Ted and an intelligent boy attended to the cooking, and the Professor provided the wherewithal to cook, easily, with his rifle, although Big Sam and Sydney Charlie could always bring in a sufficiency of wild pigs and animals we did not know by the use of stones. They could not often be spared from the chief work in hand, however, and, with the Inventor Fellow, Mac, and the carrier boys, who had now become enthusiastic, shovelled the rich golden sands through the crude contrivance, and occasionally blasted out a few tons of the quartz lode, which was dollied by hand, direct. Our store of gold increased steadily, and we had dreams of bringing in a crushing plant and a petrol engine from Samarai, the chief town on the coast. We also had the wish to let some of our old friends down in our old camp know of our luck, but, although we calculated that the distance was only about forty miles and might be accomplished by the use of a canoe in three days, we didn't care to run the risk of not being allowed to return ; and, of course, we

didn't trust Broken Nose sufficiently to send messengers through his village. A new source of interest had arisen, too, which gave us much thought. The riffles were collecting some very heavy mineral substance in addition to the gold, and we could not determine what it was. It gave off a pungent odour when heated, streaked black, and was greasy to the touch. It was harder than the steel of our knives and much heavier than gold.

One night, as the Professor was testing this stuff on the ledge outside our cave, Sydney Charlie suddenly said 'I located a couple of gully ghosts last night. They were natives; they were coming down the rocks with lighted torches. I didn't fire at them, 'cos I didn't want to waken you fellows.'

'Vera considerate of you, Charlie,' Mac replied; 'I saw them, too; in fact, I've been watching ghosts for some nights past. I expect we'll have some hundreds round us some night with spiked clubs and poisoned spears. Like Charlie, I didn't want to worry the Professor.'

'You ought to have told,' the Professor remonstrated, looking up from his work; 'but it so happens that to-day I found the way they came. That pool below is a sort of ceremonial place of some tribe near, and their priests come down nightly over the top by a fibre ladder which hangs in that fissure over there.'

'There are a lot of soloists in this camp,' the Inventor Fellow said. 'I saw that ladder a week ago, but didn't want to frighten you.'

Big Sam yawned and signed to Silent Ted, who, without a word, drew in a string tied to a boulder. The bottom end of the ladder was at its other end!

All laughed.

'This stuff is osmiridium,' announced the Professor abruptly. 'It is worth somewhere about a hundred pounds per ounce. Mac, I order you, as the leader of this outfit, not to leave this camp to-night. The others have sense.' Mac grumbled a bit, but soon all were asleep. The boys had been asleep hours before.

Some time later the Inventor Fellow and Big Sam rolled to the edge of the ledge and disappeared in the darkness. Silent Ted sat up and saw them go, but he said nothing, then.

'It's rough on old Mac,' Sam remarked, as he led the way up the swinging ladder. His companion agreed, but couldn't afford to speak. When they reached the top they saw a big village a few hundred yards in front of them. A big river flowed past,

forming one side of the clearing, while a mountain wall acted as another, the two remaining sides being stockaded. It was very dark, but fires were burning in front of the tapoo house, which was built on piles in the river; and, entering the village where the stockade stretched over the water, they climbed to the floor of the sacred edifice. A light was flickering inside, and trussed up on the floor amidst some carved wooden idols—doubtless treasured loot from other villages—lay Broken Nose. Four fantastically garbed peg-nosed priests were asleep near, evidently his guards.

Some rough play ensued during the next five minutes, but the startled priests could utter no cry, as their tongues had been treated so as to ensure that they would be silent priests for all time—the Tugeris are fighters, and they don't think much of their spiritual advisers!

Possibly, too, some damage was done to the rare antique furniture of the apartment, for Big Sam was at times extremely careless; but in the end Broken Nose was rescued and, half an hour later still, was telling his story to the angry Professor and the others, occasionally helped by the Archbishop as interpreter.

It appeared that his village had been raided by the ghost people, and those who had not escaped were treated in the usual drastic way common among Papuan victors. Broken Nose was carried off to provide a meal for the victorious chief, later.

'Ghost fellows wipe you fellows out night after to-morrow,' he added. 'They close up gully, an' go down kill you over top. Hims lost pipe you gave him.' The last words were addressed to the Inventor Fellow, who, however, had no other pipe to give away.

'Well, the gold-seekers' code of honour says we must not shoot down our fellow-men, even if they are cannibalistic savages,' summed up the Professor. 'So the order is, pack up and clear out!'

There was some demur. Sydney Charlie argued that we need only shoot in self-defence, and the Inventor Fellow thought he could devise a way of killing the savages without shooting them; but the Professor would not listen to any reason, and soon after daylight we were moving down the gully, having smashed up the gold-washing contrivance. The boys, although heavily laden, made record speed—they did not desire to figure on any menu!—and thus, one afternoon, we walked into the famous goldfields

township we had left two months before. We had rearranged the loads, and the Professor's butterfly net was very prominent, as were also some bamboo crates of orchids.

We met the Warden in the one and only street. He looked greatly worried. 'Hullo, boys!' he said; 'I'm very glad to see you. Had a good trip?'

'Not bad,' admitted the Professor; 'I've one or two rare specimens of butterflies, and other things. What's new?'

'Oh! there's been a massacre of some friendly natives, and I fear some of our men have been causing trouble up in the ranges. I am going out with an armed force to investigate. The town is full of homeless natives from Broken Nose's village, and they say that white men passed through——'

'The natives will say anything,' said Big Sam.

'Oh! they were there all right. Here is a pipe one gave in barter. I annexed it as evidence. I wish I could find the man who once owned it; I would make an example of him that would be remembered.'

The Inventor Fellow handled his old pipe casually and glanced at his indecipherable initials on its stem. 'I fancy I've seen it before,' he remarked, passing it round, and at this point Silent Ted left the party.

'I am going to appoint you deputy Warden until my return, Professor,' the Warden went on.

'I'd rather be excused, sir,' said our chief. 'You see, I've an appointment down in Brisbane I'd like to keep. Is there any launch going down the river soon?'

'Oh! we've cut out a road to the coast, and a motor mail runs regularly. It goes out to-morrow, I think; but it will likely be booked up.' Some general conversation followed, in which the Warden enlarged on his trouble in keeping the white men in hand. 'But the mail tells of a new rush down in N.S.W.,' he went on, 'and I expect some of our most restless men will clear out for it. Hullo! Here's Broken Nose! I thought he was cooked! Perhaps he knows who had the pipe.'

The Inventor Fellow felt uncomfortable, and so did Mac, but Silent Ted rejoined the party and saved the situation by speaking! 'I've booked the seats,' he said; then his jaws clicked. Silent Ted seldom spoke, but when he did his words meant a lot. The Professor led the Warden aside, and Mac took Broken Nose out of the danger zone with the promise of a new pipe and plenty

of tobacco. Sydney Charlie also made the hearts of the Archbishop and the boys glad in the big store just opened. . . . Fifteen days later we sat at lunch in the Gresham Hotel, in Brisbane. The papers were filled with accounts of the new gold rush in N.S.W.

'Men will sell their very souls for gold,' the Professor remarked sadly. 'They will brave all dangers—tell lies——'

'Catch butterflies, collect orchids—and give away pipes,' broke in Mac. 'Personally, I think it is just dross—when one knows where to get osmiridium.'

'We'll go back for the osmiridium after we have had a look at the new rush,' said Big Sam.

But that osmiridium still lies in the golden sands of the far-off New Guinean gully. Some day some, but not all, of its original finders will return to the silent pool. Hope springs eternal.

ROBERT M. MACDONALD.

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## BY BELSBY WOOD.

### II. CREEPING JENNY.

THERE was some queer characters lived i' Belsby when I was a young feller, some real rum uns, but there wasn't a reglar *nasty* one among em wi'oot it was awd Miss Isabella—'Creeping Jenny,' as we called her. My wod! she *was* a customer, and allus made wost of hersen, though she reckoned to be sole descendant tiv an extinct family i' name o' Belsby, summat akin to yon headless Jenny I telled yer aboot. Nowt vexed her wuss than when folks called her 'Jenny.' She'd gotten tale off of being christened i' name of Isabella, and nowt pleased awd lass like being addressed as such; a great gaunt woman, and what she lived on noabody couldn't get to bottom on it. Howivver, she allus reckoned she was born o' best blood i' parish, and she lived at times iv a tumble-doon outhouse, all that remained o' Moat Farm where Belsbys had lived generations back. It's ovver gainhand Belsby Wood to be a fanciable locality for a dwelling-house, and what was left of awd panelled hall was pulled doon i' my grandfather's time. David Dibnah they called him, same as mysen. I's heard him relate, times oot o' coont, that sky was black ovver wi' bats when roof was tekken doon, clouds and clusthers on 'em.

Place was all ovvergrown wi' nettles, brokken-doon trees, and what used to be moat all choked up wi' reeds and rushes. Bairns from village (hardest graced bairns) would wade in after a few water-lilies, but they'd mek off iv a reglar panic when this here Creeping Jenny comed scolding oot o' yon plague-spot where she reposed hersen of a night, shakking her besom aboot among bul-rushes till she fetched somebody' bairn a good crack wi' bristle end of it. Bon! there was monny a bairn' pair o' boots left behunt as well as water-lilies.

There was a big grass field to right o' Wood i' them days, poor pasture very; beasts as bonny as you please would start to pine as soon as ivver they was tonned intiv it. It was plooded oot i' this here war, but it's nivver grown a crop o' nowt but thistles and rubbish. Tommy Fussey he reckoned *he* could do summat wi' it, so he took and bought it when land boom was on,

and it's past mending by noo; why, it wad be wi' Tommy' method o' sarving land.

We didn't call her Creeping Jenny oot o' compliment to flower o' same name, but by reason of a nasty habit she'd gotten off, sliving along hedgesides after dusk wi' an awd sack flung ovver her shoulder, and if onnybody heard a footfall roond house of a dark winter night you could *depend* wha it was. She wasn't above visiting other folks' hen-roosts for all her blue blood, though she was ovver prood to do an honest day's work; she held her ugly awd head ovver high for owt o' that, and monny a fox was blamed for thieving when Jenny was culprit hersen.

Noo, there wasn't a kinder-hearted man i' parish than what my father was; he'd give of his best, cost what it might, but he couldn't abide Jenny' barefaced robbery, and when he lights on her creeping aboot stackyard he angers her beyond what she could bear by threatening to set dog on her wi'oot she taks hersen off i' quicker time than she took ovver coming in.

Up flares Jenny like a bonfire when wind catches it, and she tons roond on my father and threaps him iv a most scandalous fashion. I was stood adjacent on top of a straw stack, so couldn't help but hearken to what passed between 'em.

'Aye,' she yells oot, 'set thy dog on me, and if he draws blood it'll be bluest blood i' Belsby that flows. Call me "Creeping Jenny," dost tha? If ivverybody iv England had their rights I should be Lady o' Manor.'

It wasn't a fanciable job, but my father he stood up tiv her and threaped her tiv her face.

'I dizn't doot,' he says, 'but wi' that beard on thy chin, thoo's fitted to be *Lord* o' Manor. It's a wonder to me Queen dizn't invite yer to get seated iv House o' Lords and visit her at Windsor Castle; but, lord or lady, thoo can help thysen oot o' this staggarth i' double quick time, and thoo can pay me for them eggs thoo's gotten i' thy pocket.'

Well, she coonts oot eggs as slow and solemn as ivver she can mek time pan oot and ligs 'em doon at my father's feet for all world like some great play actress, nineteen on 'em all numbered, eggs was cheaper i' them days and hens a bit less chary o' laying on 'em; then she dives her great bony hand into summat she called pocket of her sket (sket was made o' nowt no better than sacking wi'oot a bit o' trimming o' finery aboot it), and she pulls oot i' fust place stump of a clay pipe black wi' summat not so clean as

awd age, then she gives him a fourpenny bit for eggs, and then she teks oot a roll o' paper tied up wi' pink tape.

'Pedigree o' Belsby o' Belsby i' Coonty o' York,' she says.

Then she dives doon and doonwards and at last of all oots wi' a bit o' money.

'And here's a shilling for yer impidence,' she says, and off she goas, stepping ovver straw as high and disdainful iv her action as an awd turkey hen stepping ovver a wet stubble. I can see her as plain!

Oor rector, Mr. Harrison, was allus worritting hissen aboot her. She wadn't darken doors of choch of a Sunday not was it ivver soa, but she attended funerals and weddings and sike like, pushing her way up nave and seating hersen on tomb i' sooth transept to memory o' Robert Belsby wha comed tiv a bad end when Wars o' Roses was devastating coonty. There was monny a young bride wha tonned fair faint at sudden sight on her sat crooching i' transept, she was a nasty sight as ivver I see'd.

Noa, she wasn't what could be called a reglar choch-goer wasn't Miss Isabella, but she took particlar pains to keep Rector reminded she meant to have Christian burial when her time comed.

Ivvery spring as it comed roond she'd gan striding up to Rectory and ask Mr. Harrison tiv oblige her wi' loan of a five pund note and off she'd clig wi' it and set hersen up wi' brushes and baskets of all sorts and sizes, she'd pile 'em on her head and bind 'em tiv her back and gan striding away iv her great boots, and we wouldn't see no more on her till time o' harvest when she paid him back wi' a shilling to boot. Sometimes she'd cross Humber and ply her trade among Linkys, at other times she'd mek her way as far noth as Scarborough, and one summer we heard tell she'd set up a conveyance at Bolliton Quay and was ticing visitors to drive wi' her to Flamborough Head. Somebody else brought news o' their cousin Richard' wife' mother lighting on awd gel throng among fish at Grimsby or Yarmouth, but when young Clappison' uncle jonneyed to London on a bit o' law litigation he'd gotten i' Chancery he see'd her sat on Nelson Monument wi' her awd stump of a clay pipe iv her mooth and gazing i' direction of Abbey at Westminster where she reckoned her ancestors was buried i' glory, howivver he was ovver tekken aback to challenge her by wod o' mooth, so he diz no more than kind o' moation tiv her from top o' bus he was riding on. There was one time, though I couldn't say for certain *where* it

might be, Doncaster races or a grand Foal or Flower Show at Pocklington or York, onnyhoo Mr. and Mrs. Broon o' Fozzil was set among crood on binks, and they'd noa sooner getten theirsens wedged in on cheapest seats they could pay for than they claps eyes on Creeping Jenny sat i' Grand Stand as owdacious as you please, wi' a parasol held up ovver her head wi' a bit o' lace trimming depending from it' edge. Howivver some summers she spent mostlings i' wold coontry, why she was nowt no better than a wold ranger hersen for all her blue blood, blue wi' cawd and poverty mebbe.

Doesn't know what a wold ranger is? Deari-me! why, it's what they calls 'em i' them parts, tramps or roadsters i' this here coontry. Why, talking o' wold rangers puts me in mind of awd 'Pop On.' I was ganning to tell this tale of *him* i' connexion wi' Creeping Jenny (Miss Isabella, I *should* say, if I can speak), as bonny harmless a little man as ivver stepped; he comed roond this neighbourhood three or four times i' year, nivver begged for nowt but just took what was proffered him, nivver sauced noa-body, nor moalested hen-yards, noa left gates open. I sure ivvery-body i' Belsby had a wod o' welcome for 'Pop On,' but last year or two he comed roond he was getting real shakky of his legs, it was poor awd feller one dread he'd have to end his days i' workhouse.

'Why,' folks says tiv him, 'thoo'd be a deal comfortabler i' House i' cawd winter weather than ranging wolds, then thoo'd be i' good fettle for a sprawl roond coontry come springtime; noo, be persuaded,' they says.

But 'Pop On' shaks his awd head.

'Noa,' he says, 'noa, folks like thoo wha rises at one hour and ligs theirsens doon iv a feather bed at anoother hour and gets their meals sarved tiv em by clock tic, they dizn't understand meaning o' liberty, they're nowt but slaves to their customs o' habit, I wean't dispose o' my liberty till I's fossed tiv it. Well, I'll be popping on noo, soa good-day all, and God bless yer,' he says, and off he goas smiling and nodding away tiv hissen as pleased as Poonch.

'I'll come again wi' swaller bods i' spring,' he sings out just to keep up oor heart aboot him. There was nowt lachrymose aboot awd 'Pop On,' he was a real good plucked un.

Well, noo I mun get to work wi' story, what I's telled yer up to noo it's nobbut what's called 'preliminary canter.'

'Pop On' and swallers had tekken theirsens off oot o' coontry a bit after Michaelmas, just afore gales got to their worst iv October. Wildest back-end o' year ivver remembered i' Belsby, sands was strewn wi' wreckage, poor gulls blown to death, guillemots and all manner o' queer bods lying dead at foot o' cliffs. Norwegian craws was earlier than they'd ivver been seen afore, and harvest strange and backward. Why, one night i' November wind whipped roond into west and carried Tommy Fussey' beans clean ovver cliff top, he hadn't gotten 'em led when he'd chance soa he'd nobody but hissen to blame for mishap tiv em. There wasn't a lighthouse between Flamborough and Spon i' them days, and it was astonishing number o' vessels as runned aboard o' Belsby cliffs when they was mekkin for Humber mooth, and misjudging their road to right spot, there was summat queer *somewheres*, Jack o' Lanterns i' Belsby Wood mebbe, choch bells ringing under water or lights bonning at Miss Isabella' spot iv a fashion to mek 'em look like lighthouses.

She was a fine hand at picking up wreckage afore coastguards caught her at job was Creeping Jenny. What she lived on, or where she bought her victuals we none on us knawed, save that she bought hersen a bit o' tea and baccy at a lartle shop i' Haven ivvery Saturday.

Mr. Harrison he waylaid her more than once yon winter (cawd was summat perishing) and he bids her come up to Rectory one day iv ivvery week to get a real good sit doon meal o' beef and taties.

'And where is I tiv eat it?' says woman. 'Wi' coos or pigs? *Thank yer!*' she says, 'when I wants to meat wi' yer I'll drive up to door and ring bell and sit mysen doon on dining-room chairs like rest o' quality, thank yer for nothing,' she says, and she sweeps him a great mock cotsey doon to grund for all world like Queen o' Sheba mekkin game o' King Solomon.

It took a deal to petrify oor awd parson, but he owned to my father (they was desperate good friends) that he couldn't niver mek head nor tail o' Creeping Jenny, he allus reckoned she was a real bad un for all her airs and graces and pedigreed kinsfolk i' Abbey at Westminster.

Noo after a bit o' playacting like yon you'd think it was hardlins creditable that same night when Rectory groom gets wakkened up wi' a real nasty twang o' toothache he hears somebody shuffling about i' backyard. He was as fierce as a panther

wi' osses was groom, but strange and timid wi' owt else, how-ivver he slips on a few cloas and oppens door, and he calls oot to cook (an aged person and stoot enough to be real cumbered wi' it):

'Maria! . . . Maria! . . . there's somebody proolling about i' back yard! . . . *Shall yer goa?*'

Soa Maria she had a good look oot o' winder afore she meks up her mind and she sees Creeping Jenny robbing swill tub by light of awd moon.

'Noa,' she says, 'I sure I wean't.'

And wha's to blame her?

After gales we had a spell o' snow, then a fotnith o' rains and thaw, followed by hardest and longest spell o' frost I ivver remembers. I heard more than one say they was i' good hopes awd 'Pop On' was safely composed i' House, and Mr. Harrison he wrote inquiries to different workhouses more i' neighbourhood o' wold coontry, but we nivver heard nowt on him, no more than we heard tell o' swaller bods.

Creeping Jenny comed into village noo and again, but most-lings after dark had fallen, and she spent a deal o' time upo' sands clicking up bits o' coal and battered bods.

Spot she lodged in had been summated i' natur of a wash-house i' days o' past glory and was topped wi' a chimner that slanted wi' ivvery wind that blawed. We could see clouds o' smoke belching oot at weakest parts and we knawed she wouldn't be fast for a bit o' kindling wi' blawn branches oot o' Belsby Wood to be had for nowt. Noabody but me and Rector ivver went nigh her, and she wadn't let us in, she nivver opened door above an inch. My mother ticed me to set a loaf o' bread on Jenny's doorstep one dark night (she couldn't bide noation of woman being hungered), but Jenny she took and swaled it into moat next morning, i' similar fashion to yon Knight o' Roond Table swaling King Arthur's sword into mere (young Clappison see'd her deeing on it); she was past helping was Creeping Jenny so after a bit we lets her be, but we often gives a thowt tiv awd 'Pop On,' for we couldn't help but pictur him ligged stark and numb under some frozen hedgeside.

Rector he axed Creeping Jenny one day if soa be as *she'd* heard owt of awd feller.

My wod! it *did* put her intiv a tantrum! She teks oot her paper o' pedigrees and tells him list of her ancestors, 'Nivver a



would-ranger among em,' she says. 'I wadn't part wi' this paper for gold of Indies. When my ship comes sailing home to Humber I shall tek matter to London and get mysen reinstated as Lady o' Manor, and afore I dies ivverybody i' Belsby will be bowing theirsens doon on their faces afore me as obsequious as Joseph' Brethren was tiv *him*.'

'It won't be long afore thoo *diz* die, Jenny,' says Rector, 'wi'oot thoo lets folks help tha' oot a bit.'

'I's ovver prood to beg,' she says, real haughty, and she gives a puff at her clay pipe, real impident iv her method o' manners.

'Noabody wants yer to beg, Jenny,' I says, 'we nobbut wants yer to live a bit more comfortable this cawd weather.'

She flares roond on me like a weathercock iv a gale o' wind.

'Hod thy noise! Wha axed *thoo* to speak?' she says, 'a great lumbering lad like thoo.'

Weather was a'most beyond belief after that. Creeping Jenny she got to look real hungered, and when folks heard her roond aboot their yards of a night they let her be if she pilfered an awd hen or two, and nivver set dogs or policemen after her. My mother wad put airf a loaf or a bit o' bacon on top o' soft water pump, promiscuous like, and it was allus gone i' morning, but we heard tell that one day when she was buying her bit o' bacey at Haven shop she fainted clean off and they threatened her wi' doctor when she comed to again, but she defied 'em ovver coonter i' language I wean't repeat i' company.

After a bit she got a queer wild look iv her eyes and days together we nivver see'd nowt no more on her, and if we did it was allus after nightfall.

Me and Tommy Fussey was oot on cliff top one night wi' oor guns (we'd been after duck) when we hears a strange awesome soond. Tommy says afterwards that it fair made his blood cruddle iv his boots wi' nastiness on it. It was ovver gainhand to come from Wood but it wasn't foghorns, nor rockets, nor nowt whativver at sea, it wasn't a sound we could either on us locate at time. A flock o' wild geese overthead?

Why, that was opinion my father hazarded.

'Noa,' I says, 'it wasn't a sound we could *see*, it was different to owt else I ivver hearkened to.'

It haunted me i' my sleep yon night, and Tommy said it fair haunted him an' all.

Well, sir, I wean't waste time and wods telling yer what it

might have been, I'll be telling on yer what it *was*, and get done wi' it.

*It was Creeping Jenny' death rattle.*

Coastguard foond her when he was patrolling cliff aboot dawn o' day. There was just a dimmish light brekkin ovver sea and he sees summat that struck his fancy as being oot o' ordinary course o' cliff natur, so he stoops hissen doon and reaches his hand doon cliff a piece o' ways till it touches what he lays owt mun be somebody else' hand, then he tons his lantern on and sees her there, cawd and dead, last bit o' cliff was a stuntish climb for a strong man, and it had been a bit ovver much for poor awd gel. She was ligged there as dead as a door-nail wi' one of her bony hands stretched up clutching at a tuft o' coarse grass, it was last yard or two o' cliff that had bested her, and sea plunging and roaring oot at foot o' cliff as if it meant to get her nobbut it could, why it must have flung foam right ovver her i' night time for it was a desperate high tide, coastguard telled us, and her skets was all draggled and drenched wi' sea-water.

Docter he canters up on his piebald pony and he pronoonces her to have been dead for monny hours, it wasn't *sea* had killed her, it was nowt but she was starved and hungered to deead thruff privation o' body, and Coroner he said some very sharp things at inquest aboot folks i' Belsby wha lived on fat o' land and wad let a poor lone body pine to death for want of a bit o' victual and a drink o' warm tea, it was a disgrace to parish he said, and I sure there was more tears shed for shame of oorsens than for love of awd lass.

Howivver, my mother took and washed poor body hersen and laid her oot all seemly i' clean white linen to kind o' compensate for me passing by, though unbeknownst, when she'd come to grips wi' death yon night on cliff when Tommy' blood cruddled iv his boots.

'Thoo was an ill-disposed, thieving awd woman,' my mother says to Jenny' dead face, 'and may God i' Heaven have mossy on yer, for thoo's had none on thysen nor noabody.'

So they digged her a real deep grave i' chochyard, close agen Dibnah' corner under big yew tree, and Rector he gived her a real good Christian burial, choch bell knelling, dust to dust, ashes tiv ashes, i' sure and certain hope, but last wods stuck iv his throat a bit, for she was a real bad un was Jenny tiv *his* way o' thinking; howivver he gets it said, and Fred Possett he fills

in grave; it wasn't his job but sexton had tekken off to see Grand National runned, somebody had given him chance to goa, and Mr. Harrison said he'd be to blame if he let chance slip by for want o' axing Fred Possett to dig a grave or two, and Mrs. Possett she said she'd answer for it that Fred wad stand jeopardy for sexton if latter was boond for to see a real slap up steeplechase, it wad hearten him up the moast she says.

Noo, sir, mebbe thoo reckons tale's owered and done wi'.

Nowt o' sort. Fill up another pipe, for there's a bit more to come afore we leaves awd Creeping Jenny at peace iv her resting-place. If there's ivver onny sense iv a story it's mostlings at tail end of it, or there wadn't be noa story to tell.

Day after funeral Mr. Harrison he calls for my mother and they sets off together to Moat Farm, and they teks me off my work i' neighbouring field to foss door oppen for em. My wod! of all miserable places I ivver clapped eyes on yon spot o' Jenny's it capped all! My mother was a wonderful body for having all clean and viewly i' house, sheets sweet wi' lavender and sike like, and she tons fair sick and dizzy, howivver she sets to and soches thruff cinders and rags and brokken pots and pans, nowt but kelter all on it. Me and Rector we had to get oot intiv oppen air, it teks a lartle delicate woman like my mother to carry thruff a nasty job like yon, it was a pitiful sight I sure it was. Nowt could be foond of pedigree paper she set sike store by, but among some litter of wearing apparel my mother extracts a sheet o' writing-paper, black wi' age and dot, and Rector he pops on his glasses and deciphers she gives full instructions she's to be buried i' Belsby chochyard under name of Isabella Belsby o' Belsby i' Coonty o' York, and wod '*Lady*' to be inscribed on her grave-stone, and if this wasn't carried oot she'd haunt chochyard o' dark nights till Day o' Doom, and it was witnessed tiv her hand by John Henry Robi'son, a deaf and dumb feller wha comed roond coountry wi' a fish cart from Flamborough when fancy took him soa to do, you could smell him a mile off wi'oot wind favoured his sale and blowed smell oot to sea, things is different noo.

Well, what to do we didn't know, but at last Rector gets a stone put up at his own expense, for Treacle-Possetts (wha lived i' yon thatched cottage agen chochyard) sticks it oot they can't get to sleep of a night for soond o' Creeping Jenny passing to and fro amongst graves wailing and whining and giving utterance to dolefullest noises you ivver could hear.

So it was inscribed i' *this* fashion :

IN MEMORY  
OF  
ISABELLA BELSBY  
OF  
BELSBY IN THE COUNTY OF YORK  
(REPUTED LADY OF THE MANOR)

and wi' date of her death and nowt i' way of a text or owt o' that.

Lawks ! I laughed fit to bost mysen a year or two after. A party of Americans dashes up iv a carriage and pair and races roond choch iv a moast irrelevant fashion, and then they stops by this here grave and proves to their own satisfaction that they are near akin to titled lady wha reposes there. My wod ! if they'd nobbut clapped eyes on her they'd have sung a different tune to that there.

Winter kept spring i' hand so long yon year when latter *did* come it was wi' a reglar bang ; hedges was greened ovver a'most afore blackthorn was oot ; chestnut leaves boond up iv a tight sticky coat one day was unfurled full spread next day as wide oppen as Mr. Broon o' Fozzil gig umbrella. Cuckoo was a week sooner than customary and on top o' cuckoo comes swaller bods and yon wold ranger, awd 'Pop On,' smiling and nodding and axing inquiries after health of ivvery body i' village. He was i' fust rate fettle he telled us, nivver noa better iv all his life and getting aboot coontry as nimble as a grasshopper for all he was tonned eighty years of age come Mart'mas.

There wasn't noa Awd Age Pensions i' them days, but there was a deal more thankfulness o' spirit.

Off he goas to village exchanging compliments wi' ivvery body he lights on.

'Noa,' he says, 'hard winter nivver drove me into workus, though I was aboot at end o' my tether one piece. I'd gotten a nasty ton o' bronchitis and ligged me doon to dee, but I was foond and tended by a real good Samaritan, and was warmed and fed and done real well to, why she gived up her own bed for my edification, an Angel o' Mossy she was, best woman i' world.'

My mother gived him a good sit-doon dinner i' back kitchen, and he got his teas wi' an awd lady i' Poorhouse Row he was acquaintanced wi', and a good wash at pump.

'Come yer ways in, my bairn,' she calls oot tiv him.

'Aye, my lass,' he sings oot, 'I's covering grund like a Leger 'oss, I shan't be above a quather of an hour reaching on yer, once I's tonned corner.'

I sure ivverybody had a kind wod o' welcome for him, and we was all real pleased he'd lit on a lady as tended him thruff his bout o' bronchitis. Rector riding womwards lights on him digging away by Belsby Wood, rangers like 'Pop On' wasn't put oot o' coontenance by tales of Jenny wi'oot her head, or tales o' Creeping Jenny wi' it.

Howivver just afore we teks off to bed yon night there's a knocking and fumbling and stumbling aboot at back door and when I sets it oppen if there isn't awd 'Pop On' all of a dither from his head tiv his boots, shakking like an aspen tree, and mumbling oot summat aboot Moat Farm. 'Miss Isabella' spot,' he called it.

'Why,' I says, 'it was bont doon if thoo means yon plague spot where Creeping Jenny slept of a night, it wasn't healthful for man or beast to gan nigh, she comed tiv a sad end did Creeping Jenny.'

And I telled him what had happened her, and I didn't mince matter neither, for I reckoned Jenny' mode o' demise might sarve him as a bit of a danger signal, for he was ovver venturesome for a man o' his years was awd 'Pop On.'

Well, we sits him doon i' my mother' rocking-chair, and he rocks hissien backwards and forrads till he's worked chair airf across kitchen floor iv his agony o' mind. Howivver, his progress gets arrested by chair banging up agen dresser, and, at last, when we persuades him to be a bit more pacified iv his demeanour, he oots wi' all his trouble, and it appears that this angel o' mossy wha tended awd lad thruff winter was noabody but awd Creeping Jenny hersen !

Why, we was all on us dumbfoondered ; we'd none on us nowt to say. Tommy Fussey was sat wi' us, and he was as whisht as a bummle-bee ; for once iv a way, wods seemed to fail him for an outlet.

But, at last of all, my mother she gets oot a pair o' clean linen sheets, as white as snaw, and she meks up a comfortable bed i' best bedchamber, and she sheds a tear or two as she smooths it oot, and me and my father we gets this awd wold-ranger 'utched up front stairs and gets him ligged doon i' bed.

He telled me afterwards, did 'Pop On,' that it was fust time iv

all his life he'd ivver climmed upstairs tiv a real bedchamber: granary steps and up ladder on to haystack was *his* roosting spots if he had a fancy for a bit o' luxury.

Well, you may depend there was a deal o' talk i' village when 'Pop On' had telled his tale so as we could read sense intiv it. It appeared wold coontry was ovver cawd for him, winter being what it was, and breasting stunt hills catched his breath till he thowt summat iv his inside was boond to bost, so he worked his way along Humber bank. Summat seemed to draw him i' direction o' Belsby, he telled us, but bronchitis catched him afore ivver he got there, so he just crawled into shelter o' Belsby Wood and ligged hissen doon among owlets and foxes to wait for end to come.

'It seemed like a bit o' *home* did Wood,' he says; 'but after two nights on it I crawls oot into light o' day and comes upon Miss Isabella picking up a bit o' kindling.

"And wheer's *thoo* boond for?" she says; and I says "I's boond for workus, but it'll brek my heart fair i' two. If I could nobbut lig mysen doon i' Mr. Dibnah' big barn and die decent I should be strange and thankful," I says. But Miss Isabella she flooks noation, she helps my body right intiv her own domain and bids me repose mysen on her own bed, and by reason o' being fast for a bit o' paper to mek her kindling bon she sets fire tiv her paper o' pedigree and bids me welcome tiv all she's getten. I's nivver been so near Heaven as I was that time; it was an Angel o' Mossy she was, best woman i' world.'

Well, I think that's aboot conclusion o' tale.

Rector he had a text put on Jenny' grave: 'Judge not.'

Nowt no more. We all knawed what it meant wi'oot onny strange parson driving ovver to preach us a sarmon befitting occasion, and my mother she took and planted yon flower they calls 'Creeping Jenny' on Miss Isabella' grave, and it thrives wonderful; it's beautiful to see when sun shines oot on it, I sure it is.

CATHERINE S. FOSTER.



### BEASTS OF THE PRAIRIE.

As the huge trans-Continental expresses of the New World, steaming westward, thunder across the seemingly illimitable golden plains, one wonders how many passengers find time to reflect that within the memory of living men those lush and fertile prairies, with their homesteads, elevators and prosperous townships, were all part of one trackless wilderness, where the bison roamed in countless thousands and the wildest tales were true.

There is little indeed nowadays to suggest such a thought, yet men still live who saw those very railroads blocked and trains literally held up by hordes of giant ruminants 'so numerous as to blacken the plains as far as eye could reach.'

Incalculable changes have been wrought since then ; yet even to-day it is not difficult to imagine the old conditions, to picture the wild sage-bush and the cactus-brake where corn-fields whiten, or the blacktail herds quietly browsing upon the slopes where now store cattle stand dewlap-deep in the coarse but sweet herbage. The changes have been too sudden wholly to efface the original character of the country, and in spite of all that has been done one wonders sometimes whether civilisation has after all achieved so complete a conquest, and whether the wilderness may not even yet reclaim some of its own.

This, incidentally, is no idle fancy, for everyone who has closely studied the system of prairie-farming now in practice regards the future with uncertainty. The richest soil is not inexhaustible, and for precedent one need only observe the played-out and more or less abandoned eastern provinces. But whatever the future holds in store, even admitting that immense tracts of prairie may eventually revert to the wild state, the ancient dwellers of the plain, the buffalo, the wapiti, the blacktail and the pronghorn, have passed—for ever.

Old settlers still talk of the bison and the vast herds which half a century ago ranged the country, extending from the Great Slave Lake to the Mexican frontier. Their deplorable story is too well known to need repetition here. The extirpation of the species, effected metaphorically at a stroke, is unparalleled in natural history, and beyond all incidence of sport. For this the 'Buffalo

Indian' is freely blamed—even by intelligent people—on both sides of the ocean, though glaring statistics show only too clearly that the work of destruction dates from a period long after the Red Man's day was done. According to figures furnished by Colonel Dodge, bison were destroyed for trade purposes during the early 'seventies at the average rate of nearly two million per annum, whereas ten years later there was scarcely a living specimen to be found in the wild state throughout the entire continent.

Surprisingly little is really known of the wild bison's habits. His passage was so brief that comparatively few records were kept. For all his grisly strength and crude ferocity he was a heavy-witted beast, possessing no initiative and few instincts, those he had being 'adapted rather for getting him into difficulties than out of them.' Years ago a veteran hunter who remembered the colossal hordes in their 'arrogance of irresistible might' told me many interesting stories. About 1884, if I remember correctly, he formed one of a party that scoured the Big Horn Mountains for any survivors of the great herd which summered there in former years. His last experience with a buffalo, which occurred during this trip, is perhaps worthy of notice.

They had met with no success whatsoever. At the outset they had indeed come across the tracks of a small wandering herd, but even these had been lost in the defiles. The party had broken up, and my informant was returning to his own settlement by river, in a canoe manned by two Indians. They were shooting a dangerous rapid, and nothing was farther from his thoughts than bison, when he noticed several dark objects standing amongst some rocks in the shallows just ahead. Before he had time to realise that these were indeed the very animals he had been unsuccessfully trailing, the canoe had flashed past, glancing literally through their midst, but in that fleeting instant he found time to touch the big bull of the herd squarely upon the shoulder, and carried away a living impression of the huge creature's startled stare as, for the fraction of a second, their eyes met. Thus he achieved the distinction of laying hand upon one of the last wild buffaloes that ever crossed the plains.

In vivid language the same man once described a great buffalo stampede—a wonderful and truly terrifying sight. He told me that upon every occasion—whether in destructive charge or panic-stricken flight—the entire herd, perhaps a hundred thousand strong, would follow in the steps of the foremost animals. When bent upon going in a certain direction, no living force could divert or with-

stand their devastating career, and thousands upon thousands have been known to plunge headlong into a quicksand, or over the brink of a canyon, filling the place with dead and dying, rather than swerve from their determined course.

No influence affects the fauna of a country to a greater extent than does any material change in the land itself. This is particularly true of the great prairies east of the Rocky Mountains, where blacktailed deer and pronghorn were tolerably plentiful long after the bison ceased to be. Close upon the heels of the trade-hunters the settlers came, and the thinned herds of deer and antelope which survived the rifles were slowly but surely forced to retreat before the advance of axe and ploughshare. In certain districts, however, where extensive tracts of country remain unbroken the plucky little pronghorn, to some extent, still holds his own. Not so many years since I came across a small troop near my camping-ground in the Beaver Hills, a very wild bit of country lying northwest of the old Wapiti range. Nobody molested them, to my knowledge, but, even so, they were hopelessly shy and unapproachable. Once only—and then by pure accident—did I see them at really close quarters.

I had been trying my luck at wild turkeys, large numbers of which roosted in the birch forests at that time, and was returning at nightfall by way of a lonely creek or inlet of the big lake. At a point on the trail which commanded a wide vista of woods and water-way I came to a standstill and, laying down my load, leaned against a rock, to rest for a few minutes and enjoy the wild beauty of the scene. The sun had set. Low in the purple east the big prairie moon was changing from red to gold. Near by the slim white boles of the wilderness birches gleamed in the dusk with weird effect. From the lake came the shivering cry of the loon. Away in the foothills coyotes were barking. And over all a vast stillness, together with that indefinable something which is neither sound nor silence, the breathing of boundless spaces, perceptible nowhere save in these lone, far lands.

While still I lingered, listening to the wild sounds and watching the fire-flies over the water, the crisp snap of a twig close at hand arrested my attention. Some animals were approaching through the birch wood, and these proved to be none other than a troop of antelope, stepping daintily in Indian file, all heading for the water, presumably to drink. Being down wind of them, with some willow-scrub between, I hoped to escape notice; but that was too much to expect. Though unalarmed, they were much alive and

alert, and the moment the leader, a large ewe, was clear of the wood she caught sight of me and pulled up with a snort.

I expected an immediate stampede, but, though startled, she was not yet thoroughly scared. She could not quite make me out, or perhaps my stillness puzzled her, for, instead of turning tail, she too stood still, looked hard at me, and searched the air with mobile questioning nostrils. It was curious to observe that in that moment of doubt she relied upon her nose for guidance rather than trust the testimony of her eyes. Meanwhile the others, twelve in all, came stealing like so many ghosts out of the wood, ranged up alongside of her and there stood, motionless as statues, studying me with an intensity that was hard to endure.

My heavy rifle lay within reach, but there was no thought of shooting. It was more than enough to watch them standing there, framed in the shadow, their eyes, big with wonder, shining like live coals, their white breasts showing in bold relief against the dark background of dog-wood and willow-scrub. What finally scared them I never knew; probably some turn or eddy of the faint breeze gave them wind of me. I made no movement wittingly, but all of a sudden, without warning of any sort, as far as could be seen, the whole troop whirled round like one animal. There was the rush of swift feet, a bump or two, a few flashes of evanescent white, and the fairy-like forms were lost in the gloom of the birches.

Within more recent years some form of Government protection has been extended to the deer, and this proved useful so far as it served to restrain the trade-hunter's activities. But in general effect here, as in the homeland, legislation to protect wild life is not worth the paper upon which it is circulated. Quite recently the head keeper upon the estates of a law-abiding English baronet told me without the slightest reserve that, on an average, half a dozen peregrine falcons are destroyed every year within his preserves. If this sort of thing is possible in well-regulated Britain, with representatives of the law everywhere upon the watch, how much easier must it be in the wild and sparsely peopled lands overseas, where every man is more or less a law unto himself?

One Sunday afternoon long ago, on the outskirts of a little settlement beside Leche Lake in Saskatchewan, I saw a group of cowboys pointing excitedly to some deer browsing in the dry bed of a slough less than a quarter of a mile away; and among these a son of the so-called game-guardian was the loudest in lamenting that his rifle was not 'handy.' This in a district where Sunday

shooting is prohibited and the deer are protected by special statute.

Incidentally the pronghorn is supposed to be the one prairie animal that cannot be outpaced by a thoroughbred horse. My own observations do not bear out this idea, however, and I should suggest that its originator has never measured pace with the big white hare of the country, commonly known as the jack-rabbit. This animal, I venture to assert, is the fleetest of all four-footed creatures, the one thing against which even the swift wolf-hound cuts an indifferent figure. When upon the Saskatchewan, I had occasion to visit a settler who owned a beautiful Borzois, said to be the best courser in the province, and he was wont to boast—with justice—that a wolf within half a mile of his dog was as good as dead when she set eyes on it. But even this matchless runner could make little of the big northern jack-rabbit, and her owner was constrained to admit it.

Yet, for all its marvellous speed, this hare—for hare it is, differing little from our own blue variety—does not afford the sport one might reasonably expect from it. Having been accustomed since time immemorial to depend entirely upon its legs for self-preservation, it possesses no instinctive knowledge or fear of gun-powder, and when hunted by white men without dogs it seldom perceives any cause for alarm until too late. Even if shot at and missed, it never runs far, being content to sit up and watch its enemies from what it considers a safe distance, more often than not allowing the sportsman to walk within easy range before it again hops away.

When winter sets in with full rigour, there is little further scope for the shot-gun. By that time the wild fowl, which in early autumn pass over the lakes in teeming multitudes, have sought more southern waters, and a heavy toll has already been taken of the few game-birds which actually winter upon the plains. But, failing the gun, the sporting rancher of a certain type has devised another amusement. Despite every effort made to exterminate them, prairie wolves, or coyotes, are still numerous, and these appeal with a special force to men who have been keen followers of hounds in the Old Country.

Indeed, enthusiasts upon several occasions have brought over draft hounds from home and set up miniature kennels upon their farms, intending to start wolf-packs, but, so far as my experience serves, little success has attended such experiments. The wire fences which enclose every 'section' or holding present one

serious drawback. Also, for at least four months out of the seven during which hunting should be practicable, snow lies deep on the land, and the heavy-footed foxhound is at a sorry disadvantage. Speed, rather than nose, is required for wolf-hunting, for upon the vast expanse of white that represents the winter prairie a hunted animal is seldom out of view, nor is it in any way a suitable field for hound-work in the truest sense.

No, the 'long dog' is the only thing for the prairie, be the quarry wolf, fox, or deer; and of many varieties that have been tried upon the coyote, the Russian Borzois has, perhaps, proved most serviceable. The type in general use, however, is a large, smooth-coated greyhound, a trifle higher and considerably bigger of bone than the English breed. At least one couple of animals of this description are as inseparable from the typical prairie farm-yard as a lurcher is from a gipsy encampment. One rancher whom I knew has accounted for as many as one hundred and forty-seven wolves in a season with greyhounds alone.

The coyote, it should be remarked, is more easily found than his next of kin, the fox. Excepting during the breeding season, he never lies underground, nor does he kennel in heavy cover. Indeed, he is seldom still for many hours on end. On a winter day when the sun is bright he curls up for a little while in some warm hollow, or on the lee side of a bank or sage-bush, but for the greater part of his time, be it morning, noon, or night, he is roaming about on tireless legs, and seems to court rather than to shun observation. When he catches sight of a distant hunting party as often as not he barks in defiance, as a jay or magpie, when out of shot, challenges the keeper, and thus betrays himself when otherwise he might easily have escaped notice. Swift as he is, the 'long dogs' soon cut him down, and I have never known one escape in the open. His only chance is to gain a 'bluff' and break view. Bluffs, by the way, are the little crow-haunted copses of birch or alder which crop up here and there on the virgin prairie. Besides being the only natural landmarks of the country, they are of special interest to the sportsman, being usually good for something in the way of game.

Artless though he is in some respects, in others the coyote is curiously knowing, his boldness when one is without fire-arms being astonishing. The first two I ever saw were trotting unconcernedly along a track not a gunshot ahead of the buggy in which I was riding, nor did they trouble to do more than keep their distance for all our shouting. I have seen one follow a plough out of sheer



bravado up and down the whole length of a section, a distance of two miles, and during the mating season, of course, almost any male wolf will approach cattle-dogs fearlessly.

In a recent article I set forth arguments in support of my belief that foxes and dogs not only *would* mate but have actually done so upon occasions. Upon that point there is room for discussion, but in the case of wolves and dogs, also questioned, no doubt need exist. Everyone has heard of the 'husky,' the stout-hearted sledge-dog of Alaska, but I wonder how many people know its true pedigree? Incredible as it may seem, the 'husky,' hardiest and most reliable animal ever tried upon the northland trails, is nothing more or less than a genuine cross between an Indian sledge-dog and the *common grey wolf*.

When, and by whom, one wonders, was the first 'husky' reared? Was accident responsible for its appearance? Or did the idea of producing such a blend originate from the subtle brain of some dark-skinned teamster of long ago? Those are questions which I am unable to answer, for the 'dog,' together with its savage parentage, has been taken as a matter of course as long as the oldest 'mushers' can remember. And how, one naturally asks, is the strange cross effected—by means of captive wolves? Not a bit of it! At certain seasons selected ladies of the team are tied up for a few nights in lonely forest glades where wolves are known to be. That is all.

The weird, shrill rally-call of the coyote, uttered regularly at sundown, is one of the most familiar and characteristic sounds of the plain. In pitch and expression it is singularly like the woeful refrain of a chained terrier who hears a distant bell, and, doglike again, when one begins every wolf within hearing takes up the cry. One often hears a dozen or more sing in chorus. I have heard a long-drawn solitary howl at noonday, and one wintry afternoon, when an impromptu hockey match was being played near a ranch-house, some wolves on an eminence about a mile away, being startled by the outcry, gave us a few distinctly original and entertaining selections by way of accompaniment.

In her breeding habits the female coyote exactly resembles a vixen, with this difference only, that she makes an elaborate bed of rushes and rough prairie grass upon which to deposit her cubs. The same locality is visited annually and, when favourite spots become known, many a litter gets unearthed and destroyed. The rancher with whom I stayed in Saskatchewan, knowing of a 'den,' organised a dig for my special edification, and seven fine cubs

were taken with little trouble. They were strangely like young mountain foxes, but higher on the leg and more woolly. Prettier little creatures I never saw. Indeed, so charming were they that the good-natured captor could not find it in his heart to destroy them, and after imprisoning the young savages for a few hours in a barrel he let them go.

The prairie dog, once an essential feature of the plain, has been practically exterminated. The agriculturist had no use for him. There are badgers, of course, and wherever there is any depth of water one is pretty sure to find the big Canadian otter. He is an exceedingly handsome fellow, somewhat larger than the European variety, and carries a far finer pelt, which is enriched with black and chestnut tints. He is not so shy as his western brother, and many times, when walking beside quiet streams in quest of the elusive pintails, I have seen him swimming close alongside, hugging the deep dark hovers, showing neither wave nor bubble, but watching all my movements suspiciously. One comes across his spoor everywhere, even around the 'dead-water' lakes in the heart of the prairie; and this circumstance gives pause for thought, for, strange as it may seem, these great sheets of desert water are not permanent. Literally, they come and go. After a capital day's shooting round a big lake in the Beaver district, my companion informed me in the most matter-of-fact tone possible that when he first came to the place (ten years before) the lake was not there. Indeed, he went so far as to assert that grain had actually ripened in the soil which was now its bed.

Naturally I did not believe him, suspecting that he was merely indulging in a little pleasantry at the greenhorn's expense. Subsequent inquiry, however, proved him true in every detail. The immense waste of water, nearly two hundred square miles in extent, had accumulated within recent years, and, according to the Indians on a reserve near by, was likely to disappear completely in the course of time. Occurrences of this kind, being due to certain natural effects, are not uncommon on the prairie, and the most wonderful thing in such a case is the teeming aquatic life. Wherever these great meres are formed there appear immediately such creatures as the mink, the muskrat, and the otter. How do they get there? Streams are few and far between, and the lakes, so called, as often as not are landlocked, lying many miles apart. Does the otter, too, take long overland journeys? And, if so, what sense directs his course? Modern scientists have devoted a deal of time and labour to far less interesting questions.

As a general rule, where wolves abound the fox is rare. The two species, indeed, cannot exist in company, it would seem. It is a noteworthy provision of Nature that carnivorous birds and beasts are particularly fond of preying upon one another the whole world over. Witness the weasel's marked partiality for the rat, the peregrine's fierce lust for the kestrel, and, to give an even more familiar example, the patient harrier who upon every possible occasion will forsake the line of his natural quarry for that of a fox. This holds good everywhere, and the coyote is said to wage fratricidal war upon his red kinsman of the plain, even preferring him above all other game.

Apart from all that, however, the prairie is not an ideal country for a fox. Generally speaking, there is not sufficient stronghold, nor are the burrows deep enough to accommodate him, for no animal can burrow very deeply in flat country. In the rainy season the most elaborate 'dug-out' becomes water-logged, and the occupier must forsake it or drown. None the less, the red fox is there, and in favoured districts where the land retains its original exterior, and birch forests or brushy slopes afford abundant cover, he is still tolerably plentiful. He wears a wonderful winter coat in these bitter climes, the very soles of his pads being sheathed in warm, velvety fur—the sort of coat that one never finds upon our sturdy little friend in the homeland. Of course, to grow a really good pelt one must have Arctic conditions; and for this reason I cannot help fearing that the fur farms now being started in various parts of the British Isles are foredoomed to failure. That, however, is a question which time and experiment must decide.

Very occasionally the 'black' variety occurs; nor is the beautiful silver fox entirely unknown, though strictly he has no business upon the plains at all. I remember well an Indian half-breed—an old beaver-trapper—who once spent the greater part of a winter trying to get hold of one 'grey' fox. He trailed it literally for months, and could have shot it at close range upon several occasions, but, every square inch of its skin being priceless, he was strong to resist every temptation to use his gun, hoping against hope that he would succeed in trapping it soon or late. With this intent he tried every known device, but the fox, a wary old stager, was in its generation wiser than its pursuer. Time passed, and no luck rewarded the trapper's efforts. Perseverance in the end achieved its purpose, however, The wily one was at length beguiled within reach of a 'dead-fall,' but by strange

mischance the contrivance, usually only too sure, for once proved ineffective. The fox, though certainly injured, had contrived to escape.

The chagrined trapper did not despair, however. It was obvious that it could not have gone far and, after reading the full story in the snow, he took up the trail with every hope of at last achieving his end. Hope became certainty as he proceeded. The tracks intimated that the fox could barely drag itself along, and, when these finally headed for some poplars where stood an unoccupied lumber-shanty which had been used as a summer camp by some herdsmen, his excitement knew no bounds. The shed was full of litter—just the place for which a wounded animal would make, and not for a moment did the man doubt that he would find his quarry there. And there indeed he found it, but it was safe in the keeping of the owner of the shanty, who by the merest chance had come to the place that morning for some purpose and, finding the fox ensconced in the straw, had made short work of it. The trapper got nothing but chaff for his pains.

Space does not permit a full description of the smaller furbearers—the skunk, the mink, the muskrat, the ground-squirrel, the cotton-tail, the dreaded hydrophobia-cat, and a legion of others. And, in any case, these, though interesting enough to the naturalist, have perhaps little general appeal. When sketching the fauna of any country it is perhaps a trifle difficult to draw a line of demarcation between those animals which are strictly indigenous and others, occasionally met with, whose true habitat is elsewhere. Of these latter the most noteworthy, so far as the prairie is concerned, are the grim timber wolves which now and again destroy cattle and foals upon remote ranches in the north and far west. Some twelve years ago a rumour got afloat that large packs from Siberia had crossed upon the ice and, working through the backwoods, were descending to the northern plains. It proved groundless, of course, but caused widespread consternation amongst cattle-owners for the time being, and was, moreover, taken so seriously that enormous bounties were offered for every grey wolf destroyed.

Possibly, from a sportsman's point of view, the principal charm of a country of immense distances, bounded by virgin forests, lies in its *possibilities*. There is always the chance that something interesting and unexpected may turn up, that some strange wanderer may come your way. Even upon the central prairies, where all the larger game have dwindled before axe and fence, one occa-

sionally hears of re-visitations on the part of creatures whose ancient haunts, as a general rule, know them no more. A friend of mine who was farming a few years ago in one of the partly settled districts near York Lake had a somewhat remarkable experience.

One bitter dawn when going out to tend his horses, which were stabled about a hundred yards away from the house, he was not a little astonished to find himself confronted by a bull moose, standing full in the track within ten paces of him. At first he could scarcely believe his eyes, for such a thing had been unheard of in the locality for many years. There it was, however, unmistakable in the pale twilight, stamping and snorting, for all the world like a startled bullock, and, as he frankly confessed when telling me the story, for the moment he felt none too comfortable. And little wonder! for a moose at close quarters, particularly when taken by surprise, is always apt to be 'snuffy' and extremely dangerous—not the most desirable thing for an unarmed man to meet. For a few seconds they stared at each other, after which the big beast took a couple of springy strides forward, then swung off the track, and was out of sight before the man had so much as recovered from his first surprise. Indeed, but for the clear imprint of splay hoofs in the snow, he would have doubted the reality of the experience. The moose was shot a few days later by a half-breed—incidentally the hero, or, rather, the victim, of the silver-fox story.

A much more startling incident occurred upon the same farm not many months afterwards. Possibly some of my readers may consider this yarn 'a trifle tall,' but it is true in every detail, and there are several men living who can vouch for its accuracy. The scene upon this occasion was a harvest-field, and it might have been Hampshire or Sussex but for the luxuriant growth of the corn, the absence of hedgerows, and that indescribable atmosphere of breezy vastness peculiar to a prairie landscape.

It was reaping-time, and the piece of corn being cut occupied a fragment of a section lying between some extensive birch-woods and the lake. Barely half an acre remained standing. The binder was making rapid headway and—just as if it had been at home—all interest was centred upon the last few rounds, for the spot was full of hares and bush rabbits. There were two guns with the party, and these had been posted at likely points to bowl over runaways making for the woods. The other men were ranged along the lower side nearest the lake, so that any game

which chanced to be there might be driven in the right direction. Suddenly there was a heavy rush and scramble; the corn, standing about seven feet high, was convulsed by the passage of some big animal, who evidently intended to break. Expecting a wolf, several men ran to head it, shouting and flailing, when with a final rush a brown bear lurched forth into their midst.

Terrified out of his wits by the noise, the shaggy old fellow shuffled off uncertainly. He wanted to get to the woods, but the machine was working between him and his objective, so he made for the shore instead. The nearest workmen, meanwhile, were running for their lives—with one exception. Amongst the party was an old Irish emigrant of gipsy extraction, as wild in appearance and character as the wildest Redskin in the Province. Mad with excitement, he too ran, but *after* the bear, brandishing his pitchfork and yelling as if demented. The bear, more bewildered than ever, continued his course towards the lake, and not until he had actually reached the water and realised that he could go no farther, did it occur to him to turn and destroy his solitary pursuer. With this intent he whirled about and hurled himself at the foolhardy labourer. But the old man, though well aware that he had been lured into the power of a Tartar, did not quail. By the free use of his pitchfork he contrived to ward off the furred monster for a few seconds, but it would certainly have gone hard with him had not his comrades, inspired by example, come to his rescue. At their approach the bear took to the water, and the Irishman, nothing daunted, plunged in too and, the moment the heavy creature commenced to swim, pushed it under with the fork. When the bear, floundering and sputtering, rose to the surface and pawed furiously at his tormentor, he ducked it again, repeating the performance until the hapless beast was actually drowned, when he pulled it to shore in triumph.

The presence of both the moose and the bear in country where such animals had been banished long since was not altogether unaccountable. Abnormally harsh conditions during the preceding winter had brought down many rare birds and beasts from the wilds of the far north, and for all that has been said about an animal's unerring sense of direction, and the like, I have noticed that comparatively few, in such a case, find the way back to their forest stronghold. That, however, is another question. In any case, as I have already observed, the unexpected is very liable to happen on the prairie.

DOUGLAS GORDON.



### ROUND THE CLOCK WITH JANE AUSTEN.

'THE housemaid's folding back her window-shutters at eight o'clock' and 'her fire already burning' were the first sights that greeted Catherine Morland on waking after a tempestuous night at Northanger Abbey.

So opened one of the pleasant, leisurely days of Jane Austen's world—days whose setting and events we can trace from hour to hour, by indications in the novels.

'How could such sweet and wholesome hours  
Be reckoned but with herbs and flowers?'

In unromantic fact, they are largely reckoned by references to meals. Nor, to the devout Austenian, will the process seem tedious or trivial, so real to him is that world, so vivid are its characters. He loves to discuss problems concerning them, such as that to which we shall refer later, of *Who took Emma down to supper at the 'Crown' ball?*

Emma—as we have begun with her—cannot be imagined without a bedroom fire. 'The hair was curled, and the maid sent away, and Emma sat down to think and be miserable.' Yes, I am convinced she had a fire to do it by—Christmas Eve, and snow on the ground, as we know. Fires to dress by were evidently the custom for guests, probably for others, in well-to-do houses. At Mrs. Jennings', Marianne is seen by her sister weeping over her last letter to the faithless Willoughby 'before the housemaid had lit their fire,' and the stately Sir Thomas Bertram insists on his niece having a fire in the 'east room,' 'by way of making you perfectly comfortable. In your bedchamber I know you *cannot* have a fire'—it being an attic with no grate.

Taking eight o'clock for the hour of the housemaid's call, what time was breakfast? Catherine had time to have her adventure with the manuscript, and was yet complimented on 'early rising' when she appeared. We might assume nine or ten; the hour varied, as Elizabeth Bennet was able, after her own breakfast, to walk some three miles to Netherfield and find them still at it there. It was also considered very early for William Price to have breakfasted and be ready to start for London by half-past nine; but

that was following on a ball. A fairly solid breakfast was this one, as Fanny's uncle hoped 'the remaining cold pork bones and mustard in William's plate might but divide her feelings with the broken egg-shells in Mr. Crawford's.' General Tilney, we read, took cocoa with his morning paper, while Mrs. Dashwood at the cottage gave Edward Ferrars tea. With Mrs. Jennings, breakfast was 'a favourite meal,' lasting 'a considerable time'; before an expedition, it was evidently quite a function, as the whole party of intending picnickers to Whitwell assembled from their respective homes round Lady Middleton's table at ten o'clock.

Apart from such expeditions as this, and to Box Hill, ordinary mornings seem to have been largely occupied by morning calls. An insufferable waste of time, *we* should say, and Mary Bennet, we know, refused to be drawn from her 'pursuit of accomplishments' by them so long as any sister remained at home. Catherine must have been torn with reluctance from 'Udolpho' to greet dull Mrs. Allen's dull acquaintances (if she did finally discover any), but probably, in general, these visits were welcome. They gave a Miss Crawford the chance of showing to advantage at the harp, and a Frank Churchill at gallant conversation; they afforded a pleasant variety from the netting-box, the screen-covering, the charade album, or the purchase of ribands at Ford's or shoe-roses at Meryton. If they did interrupt an Elinor at her drawing-table, or a Fanny 'rhapsodising' on the evergreen in a parsonage shrubbery ('how beautiful, how welcome, how wonderful the evergreen!'), well, there was plenty of time to resume later on. Gentlemen, of course, had more occupations,—hunting, shooting, fishing—we read of all these,—to say nothing of their various professions, to which such sketchy allusions are made.

In London, for the ladies, too, time hung much less heavily. Charlotte Palmer dawdles away hours 'in rapture and indecision' among the Bond Street shops, her eye 'caught by everything pretty, expensive, or new,' Harriet has to visit the dentist—with Astley's for a treat after it. Mr. Dashwood was 'obliged to take Harry to see the wild beasts at Exeter Exchange,' and the little boy was 'vastly pleased' with his outing. Mrs. Gardiner gives her nieces an agreeable day, with shopping in the morning and an evening theatre-visit.

There does not appear to have been any fixed sit-down meal like our lunch. Mrs. Jennings' carriage, for instance, was ordered for a shopping expedition at one, and Catherine goes to the Pump

Room at the same hour. But light refreshments seem always to have been offered to these morning callers. We hear of Dr. Grant 'doing the honours' of the sandwich tray, of Henry Tilney's servant producing a tray at Woodston, and of Lady Catherine, on her early morning visit to Longbourn, 'resolutely and not very politely' declining to eat anything. When the fair Maria and her party reached Sotherton, presumably about noon, she found that 'a collation was prepared with abundance and elegance.' Miss Bates, in her humbler sphere, but with a genuinely hospitable heart, administered baked apples and sweet-cake to her visitors. But the supreme occasion is, of course, the ceremonial call at Pemberley, when Miss Bingley was so rude to Elizabeth, and Miss Darcy too shy to talk, so that conversation languished until a welcome 'variation . . . was produced by the entrance of servants with cold meat, cake, and a variety of all the finest fruits in season,' when 'the beautiful pyramids of grapes, nectarines, and peaches soon collected them round the table.'

'Exploring' parties, whether with or without 'the barouche-landau,' involved a 'cold collation,' but at Donwell Abbey Mr. Knightley's ultra-fastidious taste insisted on this being spread indoors ('spruce beer' and Madeira accompanied it). In travelling, a 'nunccheon' was evidently taken, such as Mr. Willoughby's on his hurried journey from London to Somerset after hearing of Marianne's danger, and the cold meats and salad prepared (but not paid for) by the younger Bennet girls at the inn to greet their returning sisters. Presumably some sort of light meal was usual between breakfast and dinner; that *malade imaginaire*, Mary Musgrove, encouraged by Anne's arrival, 'ate her cold meat' at midday, which sounds as if it were a custom. On Sundays General Tilney required 'the whole time between morning and afternoon service . . . in exercise abroad, or eating cold meat at home.' Children certainly had a meal; Emma's nephews, Henry and John, came back glowing from their walk to dispatch 'roast mutton and rice pudding.' During the Christmas holidays, morning visitors to the senior Musgroves, at the 'Great House,' found 'tressels and trays bending under the weight of brawn and cold pies, where riotous boys were holding high revel.' But, then, the Musgroves were jolly country people, with no pretensions to the elegance of London—or of Kellynch Hall.

The 'morning' thus spread over a good part of the day, but dinner was so early that it left some afternoon, and a long evening,

to follow. The dinner hour is mentioned several times as being five, though Mr. Woodhouse had it earlier. One knows he would. Accordingly, we read of the 'regular four o'clock dinner' at Hartfield. Dinner was solemnly prepared for—especially when Mr. Collins' guests were due to dine at Rosings. His advice to his 'dear cousin' about her toilette on the first of those occasions is in his most delicious vein of pompous, snobbish absurdity. Catherine usually went up to dress at Northanger at half-past four, but allowed an extra half-hour when wishing to explore by daylight the supposed scene of her host's 'horrid' crime. When Elinor and Marianne arrived with Mrs. Jennings in town at three, they found 'dinner was not to be ready in less than two hours.' Sir Thomas Bertram, however, ordered the carriage that Mrs. Norris thought so unnecessary for Fanny to be round at twenty minutes after four; as she drove off punctually, and the Parsonage was scarcely half a mile off, there must have been longer than the usual *mauvais quart d'heure* before dinner if this was not until five.

Sometimes it was later than five. The Miss Bingleys, who personify the height of fashion, only began to dress at five, and did not actually dine till half-past six. In humbler households it was earlier than five. The Prices, for instance, regularly walked on the ramparts on Sundays for a couple of hours after service, presumably from about 12.30 to 2.30, and then 'turned in . . . immediately' to their uninviting repast, whereas the companion of their promenade, Mr. Crawford, had to wait three hours for his good dinner at the inn.

What were the menus of these dinners? We are given several clues, from the soup and venison that Tom Bertram helped in such a genial manner, to the soup, venison, and partridges on whose excellence Mrs. Bennet congratulated herself after the dinner of 'two full courses' which she felt obligatory to secure Mr. Bingley's proposal and satisfy Mr. Darcy's 'appetite and pride.' Mrs. Cole's dinner, which Emma, after some debate with herself and others, finally deigned to honour, was evidently a great effort,—was not 'every corner dish . . . placed exactly right'? Another dinner at the Coles', attended by Mr. Elton, concluded with Stilton cheese, north Wiltshire, butter, celery, beetroot, and dessert. This sounds rather a masculine affair. Mrs. Jennings produced olives, dried cherries, and other sweetmeats to mend Marianne's broken heart, and General Tilney, at his son's table, magnanimously overlooked 'the melted butter's being oiled.'

But the two dinners that most whet our curiosity remain, alas!

undescribed in detail. What, oh what, were those dishes at Rosings which Mr. Collins 'carved and ate and praised with delighted alacrity'? What were those that composed the grand entertainment when the John Dashwoods, 'though not much in the habit of giving anything . . . determined to give a dinner' for the Middletons?

The Cole children and the little Middletons come down to dessert. The latter are horrid, spoilt imps; but when Jane Austen is blamed for unsympathetic delineation of children in general, her critics seem to forget the charming picture of the little Gardiners in 'Pride and Prejudice.'

After formal dinner parties, tea and coffee seem to have been served when the gentlemen rejoined the ladies, as on the important evening when Mr. Darcy himself returned his coffee-cup to Elizabeth. Both were served at Sotherton, and before the 'Crown' ball. On more ordinary evenings, either coffee (as at Netherfield or Woodston) or, more usually, tea was served, at some interval after dinner, often before cards. Elinor, for instance, found it 'particularly welcome' at seven o'clock, on the day when her suspense about Marianne had prevented her eating much at breakfast or dinner. Catherine's post-chaise reached Fullerton between six and seven, and her mother 'hastened' tea for the 'comfort of the poor traveller.' How we hear the approaching footsteps across the hall after a dull evening at Mansfield Park, and see the drawing-room doors thrown open to admit the 'solemn procession' of the 'tea-board, urn, and cake-bearers'! Mr. Woodhouse's ordinary tea-drinkings were early, like his dinner, as Emma could persuade her friends to return from their walk to tea, and they had quite a spell of word-making before dusk. How often, too, we are reminded, she had observed from her tea-table the 'beautiful effect of the western sun' on the lawn before that evening when Mr. Knightley's proposal transformed the whole scene!

Cards (both whist and round games), music, needlework (or the making of 'fillagree baskets'), informal dancing, or reading aloud occupied the evenings. What taste Mr. Crawford showed in his selections from 'Henry VIII,' and how incredibly even Cowper failed to animate Edward Ferrars' 'impenetrable calmness'! How Lydia yawned, and rudely interrupted, when Mr. Collins began on a book of sermons! On a strictly domestic evening, we see Elizabeth 'employed in trimming a hat.'

The actual conclusion of the evening seems to have been supper—as I suppose such an early dinner warranted—though the

fashionable Miss Bingleys sang duets even after supper. Catherine and Eleanor were so happy alone together at Northanger that, on the last fateful night, it was eleven, 'rather a late hour at the Abbey, before they quitted the supper-room.' Mrs. Bennet was disappointed in her design of keeping the two Netherfield gentlemen to supper after her dinner-party. Her vulgar sister, Mrs. Philips, when some officers were dining at her house, invited her nieces and Mr. Collins for the after-dinner evening, protesting that 'they would have a nice comfortable noisy game of lottery tickets, and a little bit of hot supper after.' This programme was faithfully adhered to. At the start, Mr. Collins was 'most abundantly supplied' by his assiduous hostess with 'coffee and muffin,' and when 'supper put an end to cards,' and he was driving home, he largely spent the time 'enumerating all the dishes.' Muffins were handed round at Hartfield too—somewhat recklessly, Mr. Woodhouse thought; but how different from Mrs Philips' supper-table was the elegant equipage which 'always closed' Hartfield parties, presided over with such gracious zeal by Emma! We seem to see the fine cloth and china, the gleaming glass and silver, the delicately cooked and served foods—minced chicken and scalloped oysters, boiled eggs, custard, apple tart, wine, cake, and biscuits. Do we not see too the tragedy of poor old Mrs. Bates' 'little disappointment,' when, in Emma's absence, Mr. Woodhouse sent away untasted her favourite fricassee of sweetbread and asparagus, 'not thinking the asparagus quite boiled enough'!

Ball suppers, of course, we sit down to—at Mansfield Park, at Netherfield, and at the 'Crown'! White soup, negus, and chicken and ham are partaken of. But who *did* take Emma down to that supper? Mr. Weston and the ineffable Frank were otherwise paired, Mr. Elton was out of the question, and she had 'no opportunity of speaking to Mr. Knightley *till after supper*.' The problem was propounded to me by a learned Professor of my acquaintance, and remains unsolved. Mr. Cole, I am certain, would not have presumed so far, and I decline to relegate her to one of the Otways or their like. Let us rather imagine some county magnate, not mentioned in the story, of a 'superior family' like her own, and sufficient intelligence to appreciate her talk.

But I would rather myself have leant over 'the instrument' when Elizabeth was alternating wit and music, and have echoed Darcy's compliment, 'No one admitted to the privilege of hearing you can think anything wanting.'

E. GURNEY SALTER.



## LA SORTIJA.

BY LIEUT.-COLONEL C. P. HAWKES.

'Come, Sirrah! For a flagon of Malmsey wine I'll ride you a tilting at the ring!'—THE SPANISH CAVALIER.

ONE thought is dominant in the minds of the rare English who, on this June-like afternoon in January, are watching from beneath their open sun-umbrellas the *Corridas de Sortija* held in a tree-shaded *barranco* in the Isle of Tenerife.

This is mid-winter in the Canaries, within a few days' steam of London river! A limpid yellow light purples the shadows of the palm and laurel and eucalyptus trees, their dust-laden leaves whispering thirstily in the faint murmur of the north-east trade-wind.

Soft-hued blossoms, flung by spectators as a tribute to the skill of the galloping competitors, swirl past them in the gentle breeze, and vie in delicate colouring with the jewelled wings of butterflies questing among the weeds that we call arum-lilies, but to which Canarios contemptuously refer as 'donkey's-ears'—*orejas de burros*.

Everywhere is light, colour, music, and the aromatic odour of cistus and wild marjoram. The scene reminds one of those seductive railway-posters of the Riviera; those luminous landscapes but too seldom seen in the sly meretricious climate of the *Côte d'azur*.

*La Sortija* (tilting at the ring) is an old-time sport for horsemen now seldom practised elsewhere in 'The Spains' than in Tenerife. Along some 300 yards of the *barranco's* length has been erected a wide avenue of tall Venetian masts, each garlanded with greenery and topped with a spreading palm-frond, which makes them look like a grove of palm trees from which have been lopped all branches save the top one. Every hundred yards or so a cross-bar spanning the track has been nailed to two of these uprights—making a gallows like a Rugby goal-post—from which hangs down a row of rings spanning the course at such a height as will allow a man of average size riding a horse of fifteen hands to tilt at them as he gallops underneath. The rings, which vary in diameter from one to one-and-a-half inches, are sewn on to tapes of different lengths dependent from the ends of ribands rolled up on easy-running reels, fixed, a dozen or two to each, upon the cross-bars. The smaller and more difficult the ring, the greater is the beauty and value of the riband to which it is attached.

The larger and easier to transfix are usually the first to go, and,

as the afternoon wears on, the rest are captured in order of progressive difficulty; until the tiniest and most baffling of them all remains alone, with its coveted prize, upon the empty bars.

But in the *Corridos de Sortija* held this afternoon in this sandy gully of the *Barranco Martianez*, Don Felipe Malpais y Anavingo—the *Hacendado* of some big banana-plantations near Guimar—in the first run has borne away the smallest, highest-hung, and most difficult to spear of all the dangling rings; winning thereby the most desirable of all the riband-prizes.

'*A-ah! Es posible! Es increíble! Brava, Patroncito, Brava!*'

The cheers of the delighted spectators rend the sun-saturated air and, with a shower of multi-coloured blossoms, acclaim the triumph of the sombre-faced little *caballero*; *barbudo* (bearded), in the irreverent Spanish phrase, *como Jesú Cristo*, dressed in the fastidious black of a gentleman of Spain, and urging with knee and spur a sweating, wild-eyed, *jerezano* pony hell-for-leather down the dusty track.

The thrilling whirr of a rapidly unwinding roller—identical in sound with the never-forgotten message of a salmon-reel—and an ecstatic flutter of shimmering satin upon the point of his tapering three-foot lance, proclaim to Don Felipe the success of his rash attempt to gain at once the coveted *cordón*—embroidered by the delectable fingers of the beautiful *Señorita Luz*, the belle of Taoro and daughter of the great Don Cristóbal O'Connell, Marqués de Mirafion and head of the oldest, proudest, patrician family in Villa Orotava. For a month past the *Señorita* and her friends have been busy working the ribands for this afternoon's *Sortija*, and it is with obvious delight that she watches the capture of her contribution by this particular *caballero*.

Checking the *jerezano*, which turns on the solid bit like a wheeling kittiwake, Don Felipe halts, and, throwing his long open reins upon his horse's neck, loops round his shoulders the precious streamer of mauve satin, cunningly decorated in needlework and delicately painted in water-colour with a landscape of the Peak.

The *jerezano*, the devil of galloping faint within him, rests a leg, and, yawning, shows his yellow teeth as he swishes his silken tail—cut square at the level of the pasterns—in futile mitigation of the persistent torture of the horseflies.

The next competitor's effort passes almost disregarded by the crowd, from which rises a buzz of excited conversation, like the argument of swarming bees.

Would Don Felipe present his riband to the *Señorita* during that

afternoon?—in which case, by immemorial precedent, it would be the equivalent of an offer of marriage—or would he wait till evening and send it to her with an ardent note begging her to wear it, for his sake, at the ball that night?

In any event it would be a good match, *un buen partido*; for was he not a wealthy bachelor and of a sensible age? Her blue blood would not curdle at the prospect of a fortune, even though it had been derived from tomatoes and bananas! *Es hombre dichoso!*—he was a lucky fellow!

These romantic speculations are inaudible to Don Felipe, who waits, effulgent with an aura of indisputable victory, watching the gallops of his disappointed rivals, and reinforcing with his fly-whisk of blood-coloured horsehair the *jerezano's* counter-attack upon the flies.

One by one, giving each other about half-a-course's start, the remaining competitors came thundering up, half a dozen ribands, fastened to the easier rings, fluttering like pennons from their lances. (For in order to secure a prize unquestionably the riband must not be dropped until the run is finished.)

After the last one has arrived, the band—stationed upon the terrace half-way down the *barranco*, and conducted perspiringly by Adan Xiró, the tailor from the Puerto—strikes up a lilting tango-tune; and the whole cavalcade, headed by Don Felipe, returns *al paso* to the starting-point.

The captors of ribands wear them proudly across their shoulders like the insignia of some honourable order, and form, with their jingling spurs and bridle-gear, a gallant riding troop.

Outwardly as unconcerned as though they were hacking for their livers' sake in the *Paseo* of the *Fuente Castellana* at Madrid, the riders secretly swell with Spanish vanity; 'showing off' their passaging ponies with surreptitious touches of the spur; riding with short leathers, legs back, heels up—appearing almost to kneel upon their horses, as the Arabs do—their lances thrust under their thighs between girth and saddle (a trick which is a legacy of the vanished Moors to every Spanish horseman), or held superbly vertical, like sceptres, resting on the off-side knee.

The crowd, hoarse with excitement, scatters more flowers and 'bravas' on the peacocking cavaliers, whose eyes glisten at the rapturous perspective of so many glinting teeth and lustrous flashing eyes. Arrived at the starting-point, the riders turn their horses and, one by one, the galloping squadron ventures its second raid upon the ribands.

The horsemen represent all ranks of Tenerife society. Six are dignified *hidalgos* from the Villa, bestriding short-backed, silk-mouthed, Andalusian horses, fit, as the Moors say, 'for Allah's saddle'; their fine flat legs, full eyes, wide nostrils, and high-carried tails, proclaiming that, like their riders, they have in their veins a strain of Arab blood. Some are banana-farmers from inland, or merchants and shrewd traders from the Puerto, on hammer-headed ponies like those which Columbus took with him from here to the New World to become the ancestors of bronchos. Most of the horses wear eye-fringes to their headstalls and scarlet cloths beneath their saddles, which have hooded stirrups like a Mexican *Vaquero's*.

Three or four hard-riding foreigners also compete this afternoon. There is the gaunt Scots doctor from a neighbouring sanatorium, who speaks 'a wheen o' Spanish,' and whose long bony shanks almost touch the sand on either side his pony—a light cream, of the shade called in Spanish *huevo de pato*, duck's-egg colour. Following him is the jovial Australian steward of a rich American's estate, on a string-halted blue-roan stallion; a sheep when mounted, but impossible to saddle unless his forefeet are tightly hobbled; and then come a couple of immaculately dressed young Englishmen in mahogany polo-boots and white duck breeches and sitting on hunting-saddles, sad misfits for their narrow-barrelled ponies.

At half-past three comes a short interval, when foreign visitors open tea-baskets and riders dismount to scrape the sweat from their horses' bellies, pull their ears and tails, and run an anxious hand along their legs; mounting again as lightly as vaulting gymnasts from either side their animals; most of which lay back their ears and, glaring with red eyes, scream shrilly if another horse approaches them during the process.

The band, refreshed with island wine and urged to higher flights by the quivering emphasis of its conductor's bamboo bâton, essays with misplaced brassiness some *fiorituri* from Italian opera; to which it contrives, however, to impart an unmistakably Spanish rhythm; just as a gramophone renders its mixed repertoire with a Yankee twang and a London barrel-organ grinds out Gounod with a cockney accent.

All through the rest of the drowsy afternoon the competitors in this Canario *gymkhana* gallop in successive runs along the dusty bottom of the *barranco*; the soft sand muffling the thunder of the horses' hoofs as their riders spear—or miss—the dangling rings.

And all the time one thinks of January at home, in our less fortunate island of the North; and offers silent gratitude to Heaven

for the blessed warmth and sunlight that render that frigid month like June here in the Hesperides—*Al-Jezair-al-Khaledat* of the Arabs—the Isles of the Blest, where golden apples still ripen on the orange trees ; all that is left of the dream-continent of lost Atlantis, the rest of which lies, like the land of Lyonesse, fathoms deep beneath the obliterating ocean.

Surely this must be the faery island of Cipango, whither Brendan, the Breton-Irish Saint, floated from the Shannon in a coracle upon his 'monkish Odyssey' with Barintus O'Neill, the red-headed hermit of Clonfert, and where, on his arrival, the holy man became a naturalised Canario under the name of *San Borondon* ! Indeed, one can almost envisage the visions of the old Celtic chroniclers as one watches, high over the red and green tiled roofs and the foliage of feathery palms and dark green cypress pillars, and twelve thousand feet above a sea of legendary azure, the snow-veined pyramid of El Pico floating with mystic unreality in converse with the clouds.

In parenthesis, it is noteworthy how attractive these islands have ever been to Irishmen. The old families of Villa Orotava—including that of the Señorita Luz O'Connell—are mostly descended from Irish Jacobite gentlemen ; who, after the Boyne, left the Green Isle for one still greener ; preferring a rosy exile amid flowers and fruit and freedom, to one amid the faded *parterres* and *opéra-bouffe* punctilio of St. Germain.

This deep ravine of the *barranco* Martianez was once the bed of an incandescent lava-torrent that cauterised for itself a passage from the seething cauldron of the distant peak down through the basalt rocks to the cooling sea below. But that was in some dim pre-glacial epoch, before *Achaman*, the Guanche Allah, came to sit upon the summit as sentinel over *Guayota* (Satan), the enemy of all his creatures, imprisoned deep within the infernal hypocaust of the crater.

Northward along the coast rise the tawny precipices of La Paz, their basaltic strata spattered with scarlet gushes, gouts of gore that are really clumps of the red candelabra-plant ; and on their top, cypress-embedded among its glorious gardens, stands the beautiful old *Casa* built two centuries ago by the Señor Walsh—one of the Hibernian refugees above referred to.

In caverns pitting the precipitous sides still live, like their Guanche prototypes, some families of troglodytes ; while, at the foot, the long Atlantic rollers spend their impotent fury in vaporous clouds of spray.

Along one side of the *barranco* the dusty ribbon of the *carretera* (high road) twists upward past the protuberant bosom of the *Montañeta* cinder heap—whose clear-cut contour resembles that of a South African *kopje*—to the old-world town of the Villa Orotava with its shady alamedas, grass-grown plazas, and crumbling churches; beautiful in its decline as some exquisite old Señora of high lineage.

The stone parapet of the roadway affords a vantage ground to a crowd of spectators of the humbler sort; while on the walled terrace on the seaward side of the *barranco* are gathered the 'nobility and gentry' of the neighbourhood with their womenfolk, and the foreign visitors and tourists.

'*Las siempre mas hermosas creaciones de nuestro Señor Dios—Las Espanolas!*' Here the old toast of chivalrous Castile is justified, for the graceful powdered languor of the Spanish ladies renders almost *gauche* and hoydenish the boylike freshness of the English girls—racquet-armed from their morning's tennis at the Taoro—and vulgarises the over-millinered charms of the Frenchwomen, luxuriously borne hither in canopied *hamacas* by burly red-sashed hammockmen.

Across the *barranco*, on the stone parapet of the road, the clustering crowd chatters and laughs in the dappled sunshine and the eddying dust with a careless southern Epicureanism light as the breeze in the leafy awning overhead. Time has no terrors for the Canarios, for ever shriven by the perpetual blessing of the sun, absolved eternally from a festering industrialism, and fanned by the honied breath of an unending summer.

For them:

'... *Truditur dies die*  
'*Novaeque pergunt interire lunae.*'

They pass their time like motes in a sunbeam, or like the lizards in the crevices of their heat-baked walls.

Young bucks in black sombreros and open waistcoats of shoddy Barcelona tweed, with scarlet sashes girding their striped linen trousers, take fresh-rolled cigarettes from behind their ears, and with lean orange-tipped fingers light them from the stubs between their lips, as they discuss next Sunday's cock-fight or the attractions of some fair mutual friend.

Bold-eyed barefoot girls pass and re-pass from the *Fuente Martianez*, swinging their tulip-coloured petticoats with an easy sway of the hips that is the hall-mark of all Iberian women, and chatting in deep contralto voices as they balance on their tiny



narrow-brimmed straw hats great earthen water-pots or heavy hundreds of bananas ; weights which the women of other European races would carry, if they could at all, upon their backs, with heads bowed to the burden like those of Caryatides beneath the bulk of some unwieldy cornice.

More than one of the girls is what our fathers would have termed 'a fine figure of a woman,' and recalls in her exuberant amplitude of form the custom, which her Guanche ancestors shared with the Moors, of fattening girls for thirty days before their marriage.

Sancho Panza would have likened several to Dulcinea del Toboso, Don Quixote's buxom sweetheart ; that stout-built wench 'who would pitch a bar as well as any young blade in the parish.'

But some are of a tenderer type.

Poised on the wall amidst the foliage of a great laurel tree, her head *décoiffée* in the caressing breeze which lifts the little hairs on the nape of her neck and fans her clothes against her like those of the Samothracean Victory in the Louvre, stands a young girl whose beauty, like that of a sullen-faced Madonna, would have inspired Guercino or Zurbaran. Half-contemptuous, half-gratified at the whispered compliments of her *enamorado*, she glances provocatively at him from her *yeux veloutés* ; just as Dacil, the Guanche Princess of La Laguna, must have looked down at Fernan Garcia, the handsome young conquistador, who, venturing as a spy, yet found a bride hidden within the leafage of a similar tree.

Little *muchachos* such as Murillo would have loved to paint, with warm-tinted olive faces and close-cropped hair, importune the *extrangero* for *una penita*, while they string red locusts on a thread as English urchins make a chain of chestnuts.

*Arrieros* (muleteers) in ragged *mantas*, frayed into fringes at the edge and covering bright-coloured waistcoats and white linen breeches with black saddle-strapping, their feet in hempen sandals or tanned-goatskin shoes, sit and spit in the shade ; their walnut faces bristling for the weekly shave.

At the foot of the gnarled pepper tree squats an old couple like Philemon and Baucis, with pockmarks seaming their rugged faces like little holes in a ripe cheese. They mumble thanks to *Todo-poderoso* (The Almighty) for his benevolence, as they gobble *gofio*—powdered heath-root baked with barley—from a cracked bowl, the gift of some beneficent housewife.

Presently Philemon, with toothless gloating, produces also a bottle of Icod wine, the quality of which would scarce, perhaps,

have wrung an ode from Horace, but which is none the less right Malmsey, from the vine once brought hither from Malavesi in Crete by Prince Henry the Navigator; just as the white vines of Jerez were introduced to Spain from distant Shiraz, where Hafiz 'of the sugar-lip' composed his sensuous verses in their honour.

(In passing, it may be remarked that the wine of Tenerife has a noticeable burnt flavour, as though the extinguished fires of El Pico still smouldered beneath the volcanic soil in which the vines are planted.)

In the intervals between the band's 'selections' the soft notes of *dulziana* pipes challenge the metallic melody of the perpetual cicadas whirring among the tamarisks, and an old guitar, its strings eked out with wire, passes from hand to hand evoking here a crooning *guajira* ballad and there the lilt of a *malagueña*; its vibrant notes subtly harmonising with the high-pitched cadence of the song of some field-worker on a distant *finca*, which echoes on the soft passage of the trade-wind fine and falsetto as a mosquito's drone.

A *Guardia Costa* in shovel-hat and crumpled white drill uniform chats with a Rabalaisian priest, who mops from his jovial face with a red bandana handkerchief a sweat as copious and doubtless as pious as that which once bedewed the Holy Picture of San Juan when it perspired miraculously for forty days.

The gossiping wives of Puerto shopkeepers—who, when at home, spend all their time gazing from behind their half-closed shutters upon the sunbaked street, deriving from it the same unending interest whether it be full or empty, or in conversing shrilly on the most intimate subjects with their 'opposite numbers' from *azotea* roofs or balconies—continue their scandal-mongering here beneath the eucalyptus trees, sucking sun-ripened oranges as they talk.

(No one can appreciate the refreshing sweetness of an orange who has not plucked it ripe and off the tree!)

Even the beggars have deserted their sanctuaries beside the curtained church-doors to come and watch the sport, and for a space have silenced their sanctified whines of '*L—la Beata!*' and '*Por Dios!*'—though these are not regarded as entreaties for alms so much as reminders of the benefits of charity to the donor's soul.

There goes a pair of them, shambling through the crowd hand-in-hand and with noiseless feet, like Moorish vagrants through a *sók* in Barbary.

An orderly unwashed crowd it is that watches the galloping *caballeros*, though it must be admitted that it exhales a certain

*bouquet d'orient*. But 'Those wash most who want it most,' and the Canarios, as Christians, hold that they can leave washing to the heathen ; who, if followers of *Mahoma*, merely indulge in it as an exercise of their thrice-cursed religion.

Therein they differ, however, from their Guanche predecessors, who 'lived in water.'

For is it not recorded of the islanders of Gomera that they swam out to sea for miles beside the galleys of Jean de Bethancourt, the Norman adventurer, beseeching him not to leave them when he sailed thence homeward bound in 1402 ?

Male and female, the Canario peasants are sturdy and well set-up ; and in both sexes show physical traces of the survival of the original Berber blood of their Guanche forebears, who were cousins, after all, of the Iberians, the Basques, and even of Tarik and his Kabyle tribesmen.

Lithe as the Spaniards, tall as the conquered islanders, whose kings stood seven feet high in their goatskin sandals, they have the obstinate fighting qualities of the latter ; who only succumbed to the swords of the *Conquistadores* when scattered by the fatal plague of the Modorra 'as sheep that have no shepherd,' like Ahab's Israelites upon the hills of Ramoth-Gilead.

The fusion of sturdy Berber blood with the chivalrous *sangre* of Castile has bred a race which can assert its independence courteously.

The only enemies before whom even Nelson had to acknowledge defeat were the Canarios who watched his topsails melting upon the sky-line while the bells of their city of Santa Cruz, '*leal, noble, e invicta*,' rang out in victory over captured English ensigns and the bodies of three hundred British dead ; and Don Antonio Gutierrez, that knightly *Commandante*, deplored the amputation of his immortal enemy's right arm.

Nelson, indeed, was ever loved by the Spanish Commanders whom he met in battle. Was it not Gravina, the Spanish Admiral at Trafalgar, who spoke of him as 'the greatest man that ever came out of England,' while 'the Mirror of Patriotism' lay broken in Hardy's arms in the cockpit of the *Victory* ?

But now the last reel has yielded up its prize, and the *Corridas de Sortija* of this afternoon are ended. All the rings are gone, and the crowd, gentle and simple, begins to dissipate, with much handshaking and many graceful Spanish gestures of farewell. Riders loosen girths and curbs and amble homewards in all the gallant foppery of their ribands, gliding along at the easy pace known as *el*

*paso castellano* ; while gossips note that the best riband no longer swathes the shoulders of Don Felipe, and whisper knowingly that, destined to drape her corsage at the Ball to-night, it lies rolled up in the vanity bag that hangs from the slender wrist of the Señorita Luz.

Carriage-doors are slammed and motor folk 'crank-up' with a noisy clatter, while homing cars dispute the road with lumbering bullock-waggons creaking beneath their ponderous cargo of fruit or vegetables for shipment at the Puerto, and drawn by great-necked oxen such as Theocritus and Virgil sang of, which sway as they walk as though in ruminant converse with each other.

A motor-omnibus bound for Santa Cruz hoots and clangs its way upward contrasting in its oily clumsiness with the dainty docility of the laden donkeys that it passes, and making almost as much ado of travel as the old decrepit *diligencia* with its unhandy team of raw-boned mules and horses.

Bareheaded gallants breathe a *buen viaje* over slim olive hands slipped from behind the curtains of *hamachas* as they swing away, their massive fourteen-foot poles shouldered by the sinewy hammockmen as though they were no heavier than walking-canes.

Soon the banks and the bed of the *barranco* are quiet and empty, and the gaunt masts, with their withering garlands, stand forlorn in the deepening shadows. A flock of goats wanders from among the oleander thickets, and the animals, browsing as they pass, clip yet more closely the stunted broken tamarisks. The only sounds are the whispering of the trees and the faint echo of the lazy labourer's song in the distant vineyard, as he heralds his coming release from the burden and heat of the long sunlit day.

Four hours later the lights of the old town of Villa Orotava blink softly down at the coruscant glitter of the Puerto, where music floats from every balconied window out into the ebony night; and a great moon mounts slowly to meet the welcome of a myriad twinkling stars, revealing as she rises the wide Atlantic like a heaving breast of silver.

The joyous thrumming of guitars mocks the long sighs of ocean-rollers dying on the rocky beaches; and in the ball-room of the Taoro hôtel Don Felipe, in ecstasy, dances the *Rigadon* with the Señorita Luz, whose tiny feet are as nimble as her fingers. A broad *Sortija*-riband drapes the white glory of her shoulders as she stoops them a little, the better to listen to her lover's passionate whisper—

'*Querida mia, El Amor allanda todas las dificultades !*'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Dear one, Love surmounts every obstacle.'

TWO OLD SOLDIERS.<sup>1</sup>

ABOUT a mile from Dalbean, set on a hill-side and almost hidden by the pine woods that girt it about, stood the Castle. In summer-time, when the woods were in full foliage, it was sometimes difficult to pick out its grey turrets against their dark background. In winter, when all but the fir-trees had shed their leaves, the turrets and the upper storey were visible from Dalbean. The rest was hidden; but the highroad to Whinburn, as it wound over the hill, let you see over the tree-tops, and you could catch a glimpse of the great level lawn, the well-kept flower-beds, and the gravelled drive sweeping out of the wood in a gentle curve to the broad steps that led up to the pillared doorway.

The Castle was the home of the Laird. Now there are lairds and lairds. There is the laird who, having amassed great wealth in commerce, seeks to establish a territorial family by purchase. To such a laird, who has none of the traditions of the countryside in his blood, and who is usually a stickler for his pound of flesh, his tenants render lip-service only. He rarely secures the full allegiance of their hearts. But the laird who is laird by right of blood is a laird indeed. He may have faults, but his tenants are charitable, for is he not the sixth of his line who has owned the estate? And his greatest faults are virtues, in their judgment, compared with the business-like methods with which the 'incomer' by purchase seeks to assert his lordship and to bring the countryside into line with the city.

Acre-end, in the smiddy, once put the matter to Sam'l Delap in this wise. They had been talking of an estate on the far side of Whinburn that had recently changed hands.

'There's twa kin' o' lairds, Sam'l—them that buys theirsels in, and them that are lairds by a kin' o' divine richt. I ken the kin' I'd rather sit under.'

'Umphm, Acre-end!' answered Sam'l; 'they may buy the land, but they canna buy the richt—that's something in the bluid that's never hawked in the market.'

'Ay; an' them that buys theirsels in never ken hoo tae regaird the land. They look on't as sae muckle wealth—a guid investment

<sup>1</sup> This story is taken from *Bracken and Thistledown*, which will be published immediately by Mr. Murray.

if ye like ; but the rale kin' o' laird, like Sir Robert, looks on the land as a bairn—a somethin' gi'en him in trust by the Almichty tae dae weel by, an' no spoil or mishandle, but tae lo'e it as though it had a sowl.'

'Wha kens it hasna?' asked Sam'l, for which bold suggestion he was taken to task by Peter Strang, who had come the moment before to have his bacon knife sharpened.

'Sam'l,' he said, 'ye're a heathen! Is that the kin' o' doctrine they're teachin' in the Auld Kirk? A' the Kirks but the Cameronian are fair stinkin' wi' heresy! Sowls in trees, an' hills, an' fields! Man, I'm ashamed tae hear ye speak! Sowls are things reserved for human beings, Sam'l. The beasts o' the field, an' far less the fields they feed in, can hae nane.'

'Are ye shure, Peter?' boomed the smith. 'I ken some men in Dalbean that hae less richt tae a sowl than their dog has.'

'I'm wi' ye there, Sam'l. That's so!' interrupted Acre-end firmly.

Peter ran his thumb carefully along the edge of his bacon knife. Perhaps he felt tempted to let some of the heretical blood out of Sam'l, but the smith went on unperturbed:

'An' I'd liefer think that a guid field, that returns a hunner-fold the seed that was gi'en it in trust, has a sowl than a man wha was born wi' talents an' threw them a' awa'. Let's see yer gully, Peter.'

Peter handed him the knife, and the three men went outside to the grindstone. Above the hissing rasp of stone on steel Peter's voice made itself heard:

'Fields an' trees hae sowls! Guidsakes! Sam'l, you an' Acre-end wad feel quite at hame amang the cannibals that ate Joe Kilsyth. Yer theology's aboot on a level wi' theirs.'

'Ach! haud yer wheesht, Peter, an' ca' the grindstone steady, or I'll never get an edge on this bit o' pot-metal!' And the conversation which, like many another in the smiddy, true to the Dalbean tradition, had begun on the earth and ended in the nebulous atmosphere of the metaphysical, came sharply to an end.

Our laird, Colonel Sir Robert Venters, was a laird by right of blood. His forefathers had lived in the Castle before a stone of Dalbean had been laid. A Venters had built it, and successive generations of the family had been born, had lived and died within its walls. And some that were born there had died afar—one with Marlborough in Flanders, one in the Peninsula, one at Waterloo,



another on the Afghan frontier; and before the dying eyes of each there passed a vision of kindly grey towers and turreted gables set against the green of Scots firs. And, seeing it, they shed a dying tear, but died content.

Sir Robert was a tall spare man who carried no needless flesh. He had blue eyes, brindled hair, and a grey moustache. He had never lost the tan which the Indian sun had burned into his skin, nor the quick irascibility which it had grafted upon his temper. But he was kind of heart and he was laird by right of blood, and therefore he was a laird beloved. And with reason, for the interests of his tenants were his own interests. So long as a farmer did right by the land, and looked after his fences and hedges, he had no need to worry about his tenancy. He would not be displaced to make room for some higher bidder, and when he died his son would have first claim upon the lease. And if misfortune, through no fault of his own, should befall a tenant, his best friend was the Laird. Stories were told of how he had waived his claims to rent for a whole year in more than one case where disaster, through failure of crops, or loss of cattle, had befallen a tenant. Among Acre-end's most precious possessions was a laconic note from the Laird which read: 'A just laird should share the burdens of a good tenant.' It had come to Acre-end with a cheque for fifty pounds the day after he paid his rent in the year of the great snow-storm when seventy of his sheep were lost. But though the Laird could be generous he could be severe: and he was the terror of the slovenly farmer who lacked a due sense of what he owed to the earth. The blue eyes of the Colonel would glint like steel, and he would pull irritably at his iron-grey moustache; and those husbandmen, to whom John Bunyan would have given the titles 'Mr. Starve-the-soil,' or 'Mr. Spare-weeds,' would tremble for their leases. To his tenants he was 'The Laird.' His military and civil titles were as nothing to them compared with his lairdship. To him his tenants were George, or Andrew, or William—each known by his Christian name; or he would address them—which pleased them most—by the name of the farm they occupied, as Harleyknowe, Acre-end, Laigh Kirkton, Whitehills, or Drumwhat. Beloved he was, but by none more than his loyal servitor, Davie Gauld.

Davie had served with the Colonel in India. As a private he had been for a time his batman, and it was then the Colonel learned to appreciate his worth. When the old Laird died and Sir Robert succeeded to the estates he had secured the discharge of Davie who,

by that time, had attained to the rank of sergeant. So Davie became part and parcel of the Castle: he had long before become an essential part of the Colonel. His wife had died in India, leaving a small son to her husband's care; and when Davie took up his abode in the lodge at the Castle gate he sent for the boy, who had been committed, at an early age, to the keeping of Davie's unmarried sister. His aunt brought the boy, and found it so hard to part with him that she could not do so, but, instead, settled with Davie in the grey creeper-clad cottage with its diamonded windows at the Castle gate. Though it was long before Davie would admit it, this invasion was to his benefit, for his sister looked after his home with care and was the devoted bond-slave of her sturdy nephew. Dalbean first knew him as a sunburnt, round-faced man of stocky build, with sandy hair, and sandy side whiskers which were always kept neatly trimmed, with their lower border cut straight as a line of soldiers on parade. He had a strong lower jaw which had made him respected by the men under him; but his lips were mobile and his quick eyes were playful, so that he gave the impression of good fellowship. He carried himself well, as an old soldier should, with chest thrown out and back straight as a ramrod; and his character was as straight as his back, as the Colonel knew. At the Castle he was, primarily, the Colonel's personal servant; but as time went on and changes in the staff occurred his duties began to be as varied as his capabilities were wide. Indoors he performed some of the functions of a butler—cleaning the plate, waiting at table, keeping a wise eye upon the cellar. Out of doors he was the instructor and counsellor of the young folk. He taught Miss Margery to ride, and when, later, she hunted in the shires she was known as a graceful and fearless rider who would face any jump that her horse would take. 'Margery Venters is a wonder,' they said: 'she rides straight like a man.' That was Davie's doing, for many a time he had told her, 'A jump in the field's like a trouble in life. Ye'll win owre it best if ye gang straicht for't'—a precept that she found of value elsewhere than in the chase. And he instructed Master Robert in the arts of fishing and shooting and the care of a gun. And, in addition, he made her ladyship's small conservatory his own especial care. This led to some friction with the gardener till the Colonel intervened.

To the Colonel Davie was all loyalty and meticulous respect. That was one of the fruits of army discipline. To her ladyship and the children he was all loyalty but sometimes scant in ceremony. For the privileged servant, if a loyal Scot, is prone to assert his

manhood by expressing his own opinion—sometimes brusquely enough. Her Ladyship used often to tell, with her silvery laugh, how he had carried his point when there had been a difference of opinion between them :

‘Yer leddyship can gang yer ain gait if ye like, but if ye’ve ony sense in yer heid ye’ll listen tae reason.’

It sounded rude, but it was not intended to be so ; nor did her ladyship, who knew Davie, regard it in that wise. If the truth were told, she preferred Davie’s brusque independence to the servility of some of her retainers ; for she knew the loyal and kindly heart that beat in his breast. She told the Colonel with glee, as she brushed her hair that night, and he, after exclaiming a startled and pungent ‘What !’ laughed heartily ; and ever afterwards, when he wanted his own way and her ladyship wanted hers, he could win his point by quoting ‘Yer leddyship can gang yer ain gait if ye like, but if ye’ve ony sense in yer heid ye’ll listen tae reason.’

To the children Davie was indulgent, though a disciplinarian. In the last resort his threat was always ‘I’ll tell the Colonel on ye’—a threat that he never executed.

The children loved him, and he loved them with a love almost as great as that he kept for his own Davie.

The passage of years brought changes. The children grew up Miss Margery married Captain Arbuthnot, and went to live in London. Master Robert entered the Army, as did also young Davie. Her ladyship died, leaving the Colonel a very lonely man ; and Time, laying a hand upon Davie and his master, bowed their shoulders, furrowed an extra line or two upon their faces, and powdered their scanty hair with snow. Both were old men now, bound together by the ties of common memories. In his own mind, though he never spoke of it, Davie regarded himself as a bit of the Castle ; and Sir Robert found in his faithful servitor an indispensable prop and stay. Davie practised a constant but unobtrusive watchfulness over his master, and sent Miss Margery—for Mrs. Arbuthnot was always Miss Margery to him—a weekly report about her father. This was a secret compact she had with him, of which Sir Robert knew nothing. Davie was no scholar, so his messages were brief but to the point. They varied from ‘The Colonel’s fine.—Davie,’ which assured her, to ‘The Colonel’s off his feed.—Davie,’ which brought her north to see for herself, and to lighten for a day or two the grey old Castle with the sunshine of her presence.

They who give their sons to the service of their country give precious hostages to Fortune. A day came when there was trouble in Egypt, and anxiety—poignant though unexpressed—brooded over the Castle and the little creeper-clad cottage at its gate.

On an afternoon in March, when the blackbirds and the thrushes, stirred by the whispers of spring, were venturing their love-calls in the woods, the Colonel, wrapped in his heavy coat, was walking up and down the stretch of gravel in front of the Castle. His two Irish terriers raced and gambolled playfully, throwing up the gravel as they wheeled and slipped in their race. At the sound of footsteps behind him the Colonel turned. Davie was coming towards him with a telegram in his hand.

‘I took it frae the boy at the lodge, Colonel. I thoct I wad bring it masel’.

The Colonel tore the envelope open and read the message. From the quick bite at his lower lip and the stiffening of his figure Davie, watching anxiously, knew that his worst fears were confirmed. The Colonel crushed the flimsy paper in his hand, his shoulders drooped—he was an old bowed man.

‘I howp, sir, the Captain’s a’ richt,’ said Davie gently, knowing the answer before it was spoken.

‘Robert’—there was a tremor in the old man’s voice as he spoke his son’s name—‘was killed in battle, two days ago.’

‘That’s bad, sir!’ And Davie shook his head. ‘Can I help ye intae the hoose, Colonel?’

The Colonel straightened himself. He was his own man again.

‘Thank you, Davie; I can manage.’ And he walked steadily but slowly across the gravel, up the steps to the door, and let himself in.

Davie watched him yearningly, and shook his head. ‘I ken what he’s suffering,’ he whispered. ‘Puir Colonel!’

He called the romping terriers to heel and, slipping round to the back of the Castle, made for the housekeeper’s room.

To her he broke the news as gently as he could. When she could find voice through her tears she asked:

‘How did Sir Robert take it?’

‘Like a sodger and a man,’ answered Davie. ‘But it’ll break him up.’

For years Davie had not waited at table except when the Castle had guests, but as he was leaving the housekeeper’s room he turned and said:

'I think, Mistress Deans, I'd best wait on the Colonel the night masel'. The table-maid can len' a haun' if wanted : I'll tak' the heavy en'.'

When, at half-past seven, the gong sounded and Sir Robert came down the oak stairs Davie was waiting in the hall. He followed his master into the dining-room.

A look of understanding passed between master and servant, and, as the Colonel dropped into his chair as his loyal henchman pushed it forward, he let his hand rest for a moment on Davie's, as it lay upon the chair-arm.

'I take this very kindly, Davie,' he said.

Davie placed the soup before his master and noiselessly retired to his place by the sideboard.

For a moment or two there was silence ; then the Colonel spoke :

'I forgot to ask you. I hope you have good news of your son ?'

The answer did not come at once, but when it came it came in steady tones :

'I had news three days sin'. He fell in action last week.'

'O Davie, Davie ! I am sorry. Why did you not tell me ere this ?'

'I kent, sir, ye had yer ain anxieties, an' ye had nae need tae be troubled wi' my sorrows.'

Only the tick of the clock broke the silence. Master and man, knight and servitor, colonel and sergeant were recognising their common humanity in the shadow of a like sorrow. A coal fell from the brazier set in the deep fireplace and glowed on the hearth. Davie crossed the room and replaced it.

'This will make a great difference to us both, Davie.'

'Ay !—it wull that : he was a' I had.'

'And he was my only son. The direct line is broken. Young Arbuthnot will be the heir.'

'Your grandson, sir ? Weel ! ye couldna hae a better. He's only a bairn, but he's the very spit o' ye sir ; an' ye need hae nae fear as tae his fitness. He's Miss Margery's wean, an' she's a proper leddy.'

The Colonel toyed listlessly with his fish.

'You think Master Geoffrey is like me ?'

'The very spit o' ye, sir. In Dalbean they ca' him the wee laird, he's that like ye.'

A smile flitted across the Colonel's worn face.

'It's good to hear that, Davie. I must make provision that he change his name to Arbuthnot-Venters.'

'That's guid, sir. That'll keep up the auld tradition.'

The Colonel's fork clattered on his plate.

'Confound it! I have forgotten to let Margery know. How she will blame me!'

'Ye needna worry, sir. I took it upon masel' tae send Mrs. Arbuthnot word, an' she'll be here the morn. I've had a wire frae her.'

The Colonel bent his head. 'Thank you, Davie. It was like you not to forget.'

'I kent yer min' was occupied, an' I felt I micht tak' the liberty, Colonel. Miss Margery has aye been a frien' o' mine.'

'Davie, that's a good word! My children have been your friends, you have been their friend—the Captain loved you.'

'Ay, sir! An' I lo'ed him. I min' learnin' him tae cast a fly: I min' learnin' him tae fire a gun. I was wi' him whan he caught his first trout, an' whan he shot his first deer. Boy an' man, I kent him through an' through. He was clean as steel.'

'Like your own boy, Davie.'

'Ay!—like—ma—ain—boy, Colonel.' And, for the first time, Davie's voice was uncertain.

Sir Robert shook his head as his servant placed the next course before him, and Davie removed it again.

He set the dessert on the table and, as he took its stopper from the decanter of port, he said:

'Colonel, I've a favour tae ask ye.'

'What is it, Davie?'

'Juist ootbye the gate o' yer buryin'-place in the kirkyaird there's a grass border. Wull ye let me lie there?'

The Colonel did not reply at once. He knew what was in Davie's mind, and, being touched to the heart, he could not trust himself to speak.

Davie, urgent upon his request, continued:

'There's room for a man tae lie yonder: I've measured it. An' I'll no spoil the look o' yer plot by wantin' a heidstane.'

'Davie!—and the Colonel's voice was full of a tenderness that none but her ladyship had ever heard—'your request touches me deeply. Why do you want to lie there?'

'I'm a lanely auld man, sir. The wife lies in India, Davie in



Egypt, an' I canna be laid wi' my ain ; but I'd like tae lie at the feet o' them I served an' lo'ed while I was here.'

The Colonel raised his head. His lips were quivering. He was glad that Davie was in the shadows somewhere behind him.

'Not outside, Davie!—not outside. You shall lie within the gate.'

'Thank ye, Sir Robert! It's the prood man I am, but I ken ma place. Ootside is a' I ask.'

'As you wish, Davie.'

'Thank ye, Colonel! An' I'll be wi' ye at the last Revally.'

'Davie!'—the Colonel's voice was wistful as a woman's.

'Ay, sir!'

'You have been a loyal servant—a true friend.'

'I howp sae. I learned loyalty in the Army, sir.'

'No, Davie; it was in your heart. The Service only made it strong. You have proved your loyalty in a thousand ways—you have sealed it with the blood of your son.'

The Colonel's thin white hand grasped the decanter.

'What is it, Davie?'

'The last bottle o' the sixty-fowre, sir.'

'Bring another glass!'

Davie did so, and placed it beside the Colonel's. With a steady hand the old man filled both glasses, and set the decanter down.

Then he called Davie back out of the shadows and placed a glass in his hand. For a moment the old sergeant stood mystified. Then the Colonel rose to his feet. In the candle-light, his shoulders thrown back, his head held proudly, he looked like a man in his prime. His voice rang firmly:

'Sergeant Gauld!' he said: 'The Queen!'

Davie sprang to attention, and the two old men, master and butler, knight and servitor, raised their glasses. The same grief lay heavy on their hearts: the same pride of sacrifice thrilled them. Bound by a like sorrow, they were bound in a common loyalty.

The Colonel placed his glass noiselessly upon the table; Davie set his noiselessly beside it. The room was silent. Only the clock ticked on.

R. W. MACKENNA.

## ON CAT-WORSHIP.

BY GEOFFREY HOWARD.

THE gentle essayist will be well advised, as a rule, to avoid the subject of cats. It is no part of his duty to take sides in so controversial a matter. The epithet 'agreeable' is the one he loves the best, and ever seeks to deserve. He knows that he and his reader must agree together, or they will soon part company. It is his low province and mean ambition to say the thing which will gain the easy concurrence of his fellows, to express the lax thought and reflect the sneaking emotions of mankind. Religion is therefore for him a barred topic; so are the fierce slogans of art and literature, and the milder preferences of politics. He must tread, like the sonneteer, a scanty plot of ground. And, just as he will shun any discussion on Free Trade, Tariff Reform, the Ruhr Occupation, Vorticism, Women's Professions, Birth Control, and the poems of Mr. Drinkwater, so, when the word 'cats' is mentioned, he will do well to smile tactfully and pass on to less thorny a theme.

The very fact that cats have divided the world into two hostile and irreconcilable armies is quite the strangest thing about them. These curious insignificant little creatures play so small a part in modern life, they are so demure and self-effacing, that few people, one might have imagined, would bother to form an opinion about them one way or another.

'Do you like goldfish?' is a question which will provoke in a mixed company a mild stare of astonishment. Most of us, if pressed to declare our inmost feelings towards pigs, goats, donkeys, mules and guinea-pigs, would hesitate and grope for a reply. Not so with cats. Mention them, and every tongue is loosened. In a flash the world is divided by a clean and sharp dichotomy into advocates for the prosecution and those for the defence. You love them or you hate them. No one, in this matter, can imitate the Church of Laodicea and escape the charge of hypocrisy. Even the cats themselves, if I may be fanciful, know from infancy that men and women are either their sworn friends or their bitter enemies. Encounter for the first time a basketful of black kittens. At once they will stand up like sentries, pricking their erect triangular ears and staring with their searching blue eyes. They will demand of you dumbly, but in a way that admits of no evasive answer, 'Are you with us or against us?'

Already, although I have endeavoured so far to hold the scales

fairly and evenly, I feel that I have betrayed on which side my real sympathy lies. Let me throw off the mask at once, and stand confessed as a hardened and untiring cat-lover. I adore these fantastic, eerie little creatures. It delights me to watch them gambol on a carpet, pick their way like Agag through a palisade of broken bottles, crouch and crawl towards their prey, stretch themselves for sleep like miniature tigers, attack the milk in a saucer with dainty relish, or busy themselves primly with their toilet and delicately cleanse their fur with rough red tongues. They are to me at once pathetic and august, derisive, derisible and divine. I cannot pass the shabbiest of tabbies in the street without stroking its nose through the iron railings. Their thin and pitiful mews stab my heart like the sobs of little children; and even that loud, prolonged noise called *caterwauling*, which many find so tiresome, irreconcilable with sleep though it be, appeals to me, let me own, by the primitiveness of its challenge, brings mystery and vitality to the dull slates and squalid gardens of London, and speaks to outraged and awakened ears of the fierce red life of African forests and the ancient glammers and glories of Egypt and the Nile.

And having made this avowal, let me hasten now to make my peace with the other side. I will concede at once that those who dislike cats constitute, on the whole, a more honest, worthy and respectable body than their adversaries. I cannot share their opinions, but I can admire their sterling integrity. I am prepared to admit that the nature of cats is essentially shallow, shameful and satanic. Strip them of their black magic, the lure of their beauty, the fascination of their manners, and the scent and comfort of their fur, and what is left shrinks almost into nothingness. A dog in comparison will bear the closest and most searching scrutiny. Old, ugly, a mongrel, and with repulsive habits, it will still retain some of the ingrained and pristine virtues of its kind. It will be sportsmanlike where cats are caddish, amiable where cats are cruel, trusting where cats are suspicious; it will love where a cat can only betray. Worthy people have long decided that to hate dogs is the stamp and hall-mark of a villain. It is common knowledge that those who love dogs dislike cats, and vice versa—from which it would almost follow in strict logic that we cat-lovers offend in some small sort against the finer instincts of humanity. Slang, the epitome of a nation's morals, gives the same verdict, for it hails a good fellow as an 'old dog,' and applies the term 'cat' alike to an unprincipled woman and a horrid instrument of torture.

The fancy has sometimes come to me that this preference for

cats or dogs is a question of race : that a dog embodies the rough happy-go-lucky virtues of the Teuton, and that cats—critical, frugal, tidy and prone to self-pity—appeal to those who are Latin in their ways of life and modes of thought. Reflection has convinced me that this is as false as most generalisations of the same kind. Cats are essentially Eastern, if they have any earthly origin at all. They may adapt themselves to our ways, disguise themselves as Persians, Frenchmen, Germans, London costers, or even—most pathetic pretence of all—as full-fed English squires. They may, in like manner, copy the characteristics of other animals, the glare of a lion, the breast of a dove, the legs of a lamb, the posture of a brooding hen. But a cat is always a cat, just as a Jew is always a Jew. A more fruitful theory suggests itself that a fondness for cats or dogs depends upon one's political opinions. If you are democratic, approachable, fond of mankind in the mass, if you value emotional above intellectual qualities, are optimistic and take your religion as you find it, you will be fond of dogs. If, on the other hand, you aspire to be aristocratic and self-contained, if you love beauty and order, and are critical of enthusiasm of all kinds (except, of course, upon this one subject of cats), if you distrust the future and respond to the mysteriousness of the dim past, then I will pronounce you a cat-lover without further inquiry. Mankind falls roughly into one or other of these two categories, and, stirred by this thought, my imagination has depicted some momentous political issue arising one day, summoning the entire world to arms, and dividing husband from wife, and mother from son. A mighty warfare would be waged between the prim and the expansive people. In each camp would be collected their respective pets. Terriers, collies, pointers, poms and dachshunds would bark and growl and tumble in the one. Persians, tabbies, sandies and tortoise-shells would glide and mew and purr and caterwaul in the other. Not a kitten in the first! Not a puppy in the second! A pretty fireside picture, and not without its grain of probability.

Pasht—and Anubis! Should their worshippers ever come to blows, I fear that we cat-lovers would be upon the losing side. Our sole strength would lie in our generals. I can visualise these—grim commandoes, full of relentlessness and subtlety and evil dreams, sitting in remote, velvet-hung headquarters, each, like Doctor Nikola, with a black cat perched upon his shoulder. But what of the rank and file? Our opponents would all be men of action—rosy-cheeked robustious fellows of pith and blood, while we, alas! would be the pale dreamers, the effete stay-at-homes of mankind,

the weaklings whose notion of happiness is an urn of tea and a roaring study-fire, with a book and a purring cat for companions.

Speaking generally, dogs are the friends of those who act, and cats of those who dream. The dog is a born slave, who will follow those with a gift for command; a cat is a deposed emperor who exacts homage from his nominal lord. A dog belongs to you; a cat adopts you. You may treat a dog kindly, but he must submit to indignity and exist on sufferance. You may force a cat to obey you, but he will do so with the covert insolence of a servant who knows that he is better than his master. A dog is an emblem of the jolly social virtues; cats are unclubbable—like those who keep them. 'Beat a dog and he will love you,' says the proverb: beat a cat, and the righteous magistrate will treat the offence as the serious one which it is, inflict a savage sentence, or impose a ruinous fine.

To complete the contrast, conceive, if you will, a mouse-hunt conducted with a pack of cats. This preposterous fancy has often amused me in a quiet hour. I have pictured a bluff, red-faced West Country huntsman with a pink coat and a horn, yoicking and yorrocking, rallying and scarifying with a crack of his whip a disorderly mob of indignant furry little bodies. How they would scratch and mew! With what sulky anger they would spit, growl, arch their backs, disperse and bolt up the trunks of separate trees! 'Infamous!' they would hiss in chorus. 'Who are you, imbecile, to regiment and flagellate us in this cruel and insolent manner? We are ladies and gentlemen of independent means. When we desire a mouse we will go in our own time and get one.' Images such as these are, I find, the favourite entertainment of those who live with cats. They are never content with the animal as they see it. They must always be posing it in unusual attitudes, or casting it for incongruous parts. It is not enough that a cat should be a cat. It must lead some dark and double life, as a peer of the realm, a dishonest tradesman, a lady of easy virtue, or a minister of a non-conformist religion.

Poets as a class should be cat-lovers, for no animal so disturbs the brain and provokes the fancy. Yet cat-literature, on the whole, is meagre and inadequate. I know not what the men of Egypt wrote or sung of those cats whom—a sure proof of their wisdom—they bowed down to worship. But neither Greeks nor Romans say anything of moment on our subject. Perhaps the reader may have wished with me that Lesbia had kept a cat instead of that tiresome sparrow. What a poem Catullus might then have written! Our own poets have been equally neglectful. The theme has been left

to the unknown composers of nursery rhymes and to those thousands of unpublished female writers who send 'Lines to my Cat' to the angry editors of highbrow magazines. There is something terrible to me in the thought of Doctor Johnson sitting in his chamber with Hodge—and labouring at a dictionary. Why did he not immortalise the features and habits of his favourite cat in verse full of the tender sonorousness of the trombone? Shakespeare hardly mentions cats; Milton, I fancy, not at all. Keats, Gray, Gay, Oscar Wilde and Mathew Arnold—strange concourse of names—have this in common, that they all made cats the subject of poetry. Of these Gay had not the root of the matter in him at all; and Keats, though he opens his sonnet nobly with the line,

'Cat! who hast passed thy grand Climacteric,'

allows the verse to dwindle to nothing. Gray, a catman if ever there was one, in an immortal picture shows how

'Demurest of the tabby kind,  
The pensive Selima, reclined,  
Gazed on the lake below;

'Her conscious tail her joy declared,  
Her fair, round face, the snowy beard,  
The velvet of her paws;  
Her coat that with the tortoise vies,  
Her ears of jet and emerald eyes,  
She saw and purred applause.'

And there is a sinister power in Wilde's most successful poem, 'The Sphinx':

'And all the while this curious cat  
Lies couching on the Chinese mat with eyes of  
satin rimmed with gold.'

But all things written and spoken about cats seem tawdry and insignificant before Matthew Arnold's lines in 'Poor Mathias':

'Cruel but composed and bland,  
Calm, inscrutable and grand.  
So Tiberius might have sat  
Had Tiberius been a cat.'

This is to seize the unseizable. Here in two unambitious couplets is a brief, but final and exhaustive, exposition of the true inwardness of cat-worship. I stand aghast at such sublimity—and the nose of Baal reminds me that I have written enough.



## OLD PROVINCIAL PLAY-BILLS.

BY M. J. LANDA.

STOWED away in the cellars of the British Museum are hundreds of thousands of old play-bills bound in many huge tomes which are but rarely consulted by curious students. Among them the provincial bills are by far the most interesting, inasmuch as they have been almost completely neglected. London play-bills, at any rate, have been fairly well exploited. The provincial play-bills at the Museum are an adventitious collection, some of them carefully gathered by enthusiasts who have enriched them by notes in ink which is now fast fading.

Thus, for instance, a collection referring to Manchester, which includes a few others from towns on the same circuit in the latter part of the eighteenth century, contains a sheet on which are penned a few lines, presumably by Joseph Austin, who, with Whitlock (brother-in-law of Mrs. Siddons), was the manager of the circuit, comprising Lancaster, Whitehaven, Sheffield, Newcastle, and Chester, in addition to Manchester. Austin, who had been stage manager to Garrick, gives the names of his company, adding, 'Mrs. Siddons was with me some time and received fifty guineas per night.' Occasionally there are interesting accounts on the backs of some bills. The clearest, which I have been able to decipher, gives the gallery account of August 5, 1774, at the Liverpool Theatre: Cash £13 15s., made up of gold £11 10s., and silver £2 5s. This money represented 275 tickets, and in addition there was 1 'substitute' and 3 'orders': total 279. Obviously these bills come from some managerial collection. Others are evidently souvenirs, or acquired treasures. Among the latter is a Leeds bill of 1835, in which the name of Harriet Mellon has been underlined, in the belief, seemingly, that this was the actress who became Duchess of St. Albans. But the Duchess was then sixty years of age and within two years of her death. The lady on the Leeds programme was a Mrs. Mellon, *née* Woolgar, who was a member of the York circuit stock company, which included Leeds.

Poignant, and possessing some historical value, is the penned memorandum on a Bristol bill of May 31, 1769, when 'Venice

Preserved' was played : 'The last part Mr. Powell ever performed was that of Jaffier. I saw it.—W. H.' This refers to the final appearance of one who was Garrick's understudy in London, William Powell, who, like Garrick, was born in Hereford, and, after creating a furore on his first appearance, died at the early age of thirty-three, as the result of a cold caught whilst playing cricket the day following his appearance as Jaffier. A bill of June 30, 1769, in the Bristol collection is as follows :

' Mr. Powell  
Lying, it is feared, at the  
Point of Death,  
And as the keeping him quiet at this Period, is of the  
utmost consequence to him,  
It is humbly hop'd the Humanity of the Publick, will  
excuse the managers complying with  
The Request of his distress'd  
Family and Physicians  
To Defer Acting 'till  
Monday

As Mr. Powell's Lodging is next door to the Theatre.'

Powell died on July 3, and a bill of the 14th announced that the performance was for the benefit of his family. A quaint Bristol bill of August 21 in the same year announces a benefit for Mrs. Green, an actress, 'at the desire of several of the Antient and Honourable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons,' and contains this notification :

'The Brethren are desir'd to meet at the Shakespear Tavern, in King St., at Five O'clock precisely, thence to proceed Cloathed to the Theatre where Part of the Pit will be rail'd in for their Accommodation.'

In the same year there was some trouble among the company, which was frankly disclosed in the bills—a practice that was common at the time and makes piquant reading. In Bristol, on August 24, 1769, a bill contains a long statement, beginning :

'Mrs. Bulkley, having been injuriously attack'd in an Advertisement yesterday, wherein she is charg'd with refusing to dance the Allemande last night, she thinks it her Duty to explain to the Publick (to whom she is so much oblig'd) her reasons for such refusal.'

She goes on to explain that she is not engaged as dancer, that she was fatigued, and that only certain persons had a right to call on her services by agreement. That Allemande kept up verbal gyrations in the bills for some time. Liverpool bills of 1778 disclosed even more of the managerial troubles, and in connexion with the famous Lee Lewes, who had his difficulties in London too. Lewes took a benefit on September 4, 1778, at Liverpool, and the bill contains this footnote :

‘ Mr. Lee Lewes, finding by the rehearsal (notwithstanding the willingness of the Company to assist him) that there was not time sufficient to prepare the farce of *The Devil upon Two Sticks* for reproduction—He chose rather to withdraw it, than lay it before the public in an imperfect state.’

This was only the beginning of a comedy which is to be traced in the bills. On September 9 it was announced that Lewes had the same objection to the part of the Nabob, necessitating a change of programme. It was also significantly stated that this was the last night of Lewes’s engagement. He was followed by a Mr. Lee, to whose Hamlet, by the way, Kemble played Laertes, and who apparently spent a goodly portion of his brief stay in Liverpool in composing addresses to the public. The first of these, dated September 11, was as follows :

‘ Before Mr. Lee appears, he thinks it incumbent on him respectfully to acquaint the Town that soon after the late dispute happened at the Theatre Royal, He accepted a proposal made to him to play four nights in Liverpool, on the same terms with Mr. Henderson ; but unluckily found on his arrival that no reconciliation had taken place, that, on the contrary, many of the chief inhabitants had resolv’d to disavow the Theatre on almost every occasion. Not having the advantage of being known here in his public Character, and being in no ways connected with past Events, Mr. Lee is induced to hope and believe that the Displeasure of the Town will so far subside as not to deprive an Actor (thus circumstanc’d) of the pleasure or attention of those Ladies and Gentlemen who have long patroniz’d the Stage, and who must consequently be the best judges of Merit in its Professors.’

Three days later, on September 14, Lee expressed thanks on the bill in equally fulsome rhodomontade, referring to ‘ so polite an audience ’ whose presence ‘ was a striking proof of candour,’ and whose ‘ warm approbation given at the close of the play a

pleasing mark of Favour.' On the 18th he announced that his last two nights were 'deferred,' and a week later there is an announcement beginning, 'The time Mr. Lee engag'd for being near expir'd the Public may be assur'd that this . . .'; and here, unfortunately, the bottom portion of the bill has been cut off. Finally, the egregious Mr. Lee takes a flamboyant farewell on September 28, his last night, 'with a consciousness, agreeably confirm'd by those audiences who honour'd his nights, that a no less respectful exertion has been made to render the whole pleasing, than could have taken place had they met with better success.' If this was the John Lee who died in 1781, he was notoriously quarrelsome, aggressive, and vainglorious, and, I am inclined to think, one of the prototypes of Sheridan's Joseph Surface.

The Liverpool bills of this period are exceedingly interesting for the details of the career of Mrs. Siddons before she achieved fame. She played, among other parts, Polly Peachum in 'The Beggar's Opera,' the Player Queen in 'Hamlet,' and, on her benefits, Belcour (a male part) in 'The West Indian,' Hamlet (with alterations), and once, apparently, Benvolio—although a second bill of the same night suggests that it was *Mr.* Siddons who played that rôle.

The practice of confiding in the public was carried to extremes that appear highly ridiculous nowadays, and, apart from a lack of delicacy, there was also a total disregard of that reticence which the libel laws now impose. The Manchester collection contains a newspaper cutting of an advertisement in which a Mr. Penn in 1788 thanks the company for their weekly contributions whilst he is in Lancaster Castle—gaol, obviously—and appeals for the success of his benefit 'to countenance the only chance now left him to procure (that blessing so dear to every species of Humanity) his—Liberty!'

A Mr. Grist, appealing *ad misericordiam* for his benefit in this same year, discloses the terms of his engagement: 'To perform 12 nights without salary but what may arise from receipts on his benefit night, after deducting the manager's charges of £31 10s., together with extra printing, &c.' Benefits were not due to generosity: they were part of the vicious system of payment in vogue; and this explains why all the members of the staff, including doorkeepers, and, at Manchester, 'Kitty Harvey, fruit-woman,' participated. It is notorious that they were not always beneficial to the recipients, and a Bristol bill of 1789 announces a second

benefit because the takings at the first were less than the expenses.

In 1789, in Manchester, Mr. Ryley made public a long explanation of a dispute due to the refusal to allow his wife to play her usual part in the comic opera 'Rosina'; she declined another part, and, in 'revenge,' a Miss Richards would not play in Mr. Ryley's new farce, whereby he feared he would suffer considerably. Perhaps the most intimate announcement of all is that made on the bills in Manchester on February 15, 1808, that Mr. Swendall, evidently a favourite, cannot appear because of 'gout in the stomach.'

Duels on the bills are not infrequent. The visit of the Young Roscius, Master Betty, to Birmingham in 1804 must have disturbed the adults of the stock company, for an elaborate statement by the boy's father exonerates the manager, the elder Macready (spelt M'Ready), from a charge that he had not been anxious for the prodigy to succeed. This was followed by personal explanations by two members of the company that illness alone was the cause of their absence from the casts. In Leeds in 1833 a Miss Aldridge announces a concert, 'being impelled to the undertaking in consequence of the cruel and unmerited conduct of the present manager of the Leeds Theatre, Mr. O. E. Read, who has deprived her of her benefit at the Theatre and withheld a portion of her salary, amid circumstances of great injustice.'

This bill, with the charge emphasised by means of italics and capitals, promptly drew an indignant retort from Mr. Read, headed 'Miss Aldridge's Unwarrantable Charge.' He stated that the amount withheld was 'One Pound' (with four notes of exclamation), owing to her withdrawal early in the week, and expressed his readiness to refer the matter to arbitration, because—delicious consideration this—'a Public Exposure of the case would interfere with that respect he considers on all occasions due to a Female.' The lady had the last word, an inordinately long one, and also her concert.

Five years afterwards the manager who followed Read, a Mr. J. T. Downes, issued a bill from which the print still appears to be bubbling with righteous indignation. It has reference 'to the scene of a most disgraceful nature on the previous evening, occasioned by the unparalleled conduct of Mr. Fitzjames.' Full details are given of the awful conduct of the actor. Poor chap! his sins were human, but multitudinous. He got credit from tradesmen, left without liquidating his debts, was summonsed, was helped

with money by Mr. Downes, but still did not pay, and would not give security for his benefit—an interesting practice is disclosed in this statement. Mr. Downes rubbed it in, too, by appending a letter from the manager at Bath, where Fitzjames had behaved similarly and had left without notice, and a statement signed by the whole of the company disavowing, repudiating, and reprobating the disgraced mummer.

In the adjoining town of Bradford in 1844 a lady, a Miss Mackenzie, was similarly pilloried for having 'absconded.' This kind of denunciation is not altogether unknown to-day, but it is treated as a domestic affair and confined to the theatrical Press. It is not to be supposed, however, that disciplinary measures were lacking. The 'Articles to be Observed' by Austin and Whitlock's Company, fortunately preserved in the Manchester collection, are of a rigour that would not be tolerated nowadays. There is an elaborate scale of 'forfeits,' ranging from threepence per scene missed at rehearsals to half a crown for failure to attend the whole rehearsal, and the night's share, with a minimum of five shillings, for a missed performance. The prompter was mulcted on a heavier scale; the presence of a dog (if not in the play) cost its owner a shilling; an artist who left the theatre in his stage 'cloaths' was fined half a crown, while refusal of a part involved a ten-shilling forfeit and the risk of 'self-dismissal.' Forfeits were stopped out of salaries, there were no advances before pay-day, and the Forfeit Fund, it is to be noted, was not appropriated by the management, but was divided among the company at the discretion of the manager, who rendered a full account. A month's notice was expected (and presumably given), intemperance was not accepted as sickness excuse, and there is a solemn warning against irregularity of living which would render an artist incapable of playing.

The Newcastle collection contains a copy of the humble petition of Joseph Austin and his partner addressed to the mayor, praying for the transference of the licence of the theatre. It is dated April 1, 1769.

Austin and Whitlock's Company travelled some 1100 miles in the course of the year's circuit, and it is evident also that the London stars must have done a good deal of uncomfortable travelling, judging by the regularity with which they appeared at the leading theatres in the provinces. In those days performances sometimes began as early as six o'clock, with the doors opening an hour earlier. 'No persons can be admitted behind the scenes'



is an announcement that appears practically everywhere; at the same time the stage-door was often used as the entrance to the boxes, and the practice of messenger-boys holding places in the queue for clients was anticipated over a century ago, for servants who are to keep places are 'desired to be at the stage-door a quarter before six.' Booking seats was evidently not a simple process; a regulation notice was that no places 'will be considered as taken in the box plan unless tickets are taken at the time of entering the name.' Brunton, the Plymouth manager, whose sister left the stage to become Countess of Craven, found it necessary to announce, in 1829, 'that in future to prevent any unpleasant misunderstanding, persons will be stationed in the boxes to secure those places that may be previously taken in the box plan.' Brunton had a fondness for the phrase 'Never acted here,' and applied it frequently to plays that had previously been performed, suggesting that he either presumed on the poor memories of his patrons or that he took no trouble to alter the bills when they were reprinted.

The Plymouth collection includes an interesting document—a copy of the Lord Chamberlain's letter of January 6, 1827, ordering the closing of the theatres on the occasion of the death of the Duke of York. 'The King, taking into his benevolent consideration the very great distress which the shutting of the Theatres for any length of time would occasion to numerous families,' was 'graciously pleased' to restrict the closing to four separate days.

Warnings against the purchase of forged tickets are frequent: it is quaintly put at Bristol—'Tickets sold at the doors will not be admitted.' In Birmingham in 1796 it was declared that the circulation of gallery tickets (presumably beforehand) was objected to by the magistrates and others as 'injurious.' In Birmingham, by the way, half-price at nine o'clock was unknown at that time, so that this practice was by no means as general as is supposed. It was, moreover, frequently suspended when stars were in the bill, and at Sheffield, during a visit by Macready, half-price, or 'second account,' as it was termed, did not obtain 'till Mr. M.'s performances are concluded.' This announcement was supplemented by the managerial intimation: 'At the same time he begs to state that nothing short of the most liberal patronage can, by possibility, remunerate him, and he trusts to the good taste of the people of Sheffield, for such an amount of support as will, at all events, secure him against loss.'

The manager was the elder Robertson, father of Mrs. Kendal, who had a tendency to spread himself on the bills in long-winded and perfervid discourse. His bills, in common with most others at this Early Victorian period, were a mass of reading matter in tiny print, presenting the appearance almost of a newspaper, in striking contrast to the small and neat bills of half a century earlier, which to-day have all the seeming of dainty invitations, issued by another Robertson at Nottingham. Even in the latter part of the eighteenth century it was customary to print ballads or a full synopsis of the pantomime on the back of the play-bill, but it was only when melodrama fastened its grip on the theatres later that bills became blatant, with shrieking type and a wealth of lurid detail. This style of bill begins really with the advertisements of Astley's Circus on tour about the beginning of the nineteenth century and marks the difference between the older bill, which was a programme, and the newer type which was presumably intended to attract attention on the walls.

Bills took on colours and began to adopt alluring phrases, with quotations from Press notices, while the homiletical descriptions of plays, not altogether unknown before this, became more bombastic. 'The Mysterious Husband,' by Cumberland, was commended as a play in which 'the libertine will see his likeness and must heartily despise himself'; 'The Hypocrite' was eulogised in this wise:

'There is no cruelty so unrelenting, no absurdity so inexplicable, as that which influences the fanatic in his bigoted and presumptuous supposition of doing service to religion. . . . The play of the Hypocrite effectively points out the way by which we may distinguish between virtue and the appearance of it: it evinces the power of the drama to punish presumption, and to the eye of the reflecting auditor, satisfactorily proves that a harmless hilarity and buoyant cheerfulness is always the concomitant of sense and genius.'

'The Life of a Woman,' which to-day would be boldly designated an exposure of the White Slave traffic, gave opportunity for a eulogy of Hogarth on whose pictures it was based, with such phrases, 'Luckily for posterity, and for Morality, the engravings still exist . . . the priceless example which is more valuable than all precept.' Shakespeare also came into his poster kingdom. A Plymouth bill of 'King Lear,' in 1826, exhausts itself in florid panegyric, referring to the popularity of Shakespeare 'on the banks of the

Nile, the Ganges, the Amazon, and St. Lawrence, in all nations and in all climates,' to devotees who 'adore his memory on this side of idolatry,' and to the 'homage of a free and enlightened people to the grandest genius the world ever saw.' Nevertheless, variety items were spatchcocked between the acts of Shakespearean plays: Rosalind in 'As You Like It' invariably introduced a 'cuckoo song,' and Lorenzo and Jessica in 'The Merchant of Venice' were always treated as singing parts. It is interesting to note some first performances of Shakespeare—'Measure for Measure' at Bristol, July 25, 1770, and 'The Tempest,' Bristol, in 1771; 'A Winter's Tale,' Manchester, January 7, 1808; and the restoration of the 'original text' of 'As You Like It' by Miss Cushman at Leeds (and, of course, elsewhere) in 1846. Curiously enough, a bill of a public reading by Kemble on April 12, 1812, in Newcastle, gives a programme of pieces from which Shakespeare is conspicuously absent. Incidentally it may be mentioned that when Congreve's comedies were revived in Liverpool in 1776, 'Love for Love' was shorn of 'all the little indelicacies which have formerly rendered it exceptionable.'

A century ago the theatre nights in the provinces were four a week, with Saturday performances exceedingly rare and apparently restricted to special occasions, such as a race-week. Saturday performances, now the most popular of all, apparently only came into vogue in the Victorian era; in 1848 a Leeds bill announces that the theatre will be open 'every lawful evening' and later 'every evening.' The use of the word 'lawful' denotes how the villain Red Tape still pursued Thalia, and gives point to the subterfuges she adopted to evade him. Many of the earliest bills in the eighteenth century indicate the failure to secure a licence in the announcement of a 'concert, between the several parts of which will be played (gratis) a new comedy,' or whatever the play happened to be; and the nervous tension is revealed in a Manchester bill footnote of 1789: 'The gentleman who was so obliging as to send Mrs Taylor (who played Juliet) an Epilogue is respectfully informed that the manager dare not permit anything to be spoken on the stage that has not passed the Lord Chamberlain's Office.' Similarly Birmingham amateurs, who, as elsewhere, in giving performances for charity, had to obtain the permission of the mayor for the opening of the theatre out of season, announced that all songs had been submitted to the Lord Chamberlain. Amateur performances were common, but not always were the names of

the players given. In one Birmingham programme they are filled in the bill in ink. Subsequently, these amateurs developed ambition, and they took benefits after the manner of professionals; one set of amateurs in Plymouth had the temerity to undertake a harlequinade.

The seasonal opening of the theatres led to the intimation, on reopening, that the buildings were well aired, or that good fires were constantly kept to render them free from damp. The Sheffield theatre, after an overhauling in 1839, advertised that the pit seats were furnished with backs—there are some in London still without—and that ‘stoves in the passages and double doors will, it is presumed, keep the theatre thoroughly warmed.’ A limited number of season tickets was also offered. The introduction of gas is naturally announced as an attraction, but in Newcastle it led to a disaster; the woodwork of the boxes caught fire from a jet, and in the panic eight persons were killed. The bill of February 21, 1823, immediately following this event, announced the closing of the theatre for a night, and the manager, Mr. de Camp, added that with regret, but for his protection, he was compelled to reopen, but there would be additional entrances and ‘gas entirely done away with.’ He concluded by ‘trusting the public will bear in mind his late heavy losses, by the inclemency of the season, by his property at sea, and the present lamented catastrophe.’

This tendency to appeal to the charity of the audience was carried to surprising lengths. Mr. and Mrs. O’Brien, on taking their benefit in Nottingham in 1808, thank the public for forty years’ support, and ‘deny that they are amply provided for by the will of the late James Augustus Whiteley, Esq.’ Four years later Mrs. O’Brien took her benefit alone, and ‘announces that she has no resources of any kind except a free annual benefit at Derby and Nottingham by the liberality of Robertson and Manly’ (the managers). Evidently the mythical legacy pursued the aged actress into her widowhood. In 1842, when business was bad everywhere, the Bradford manager pathetically complained of ‘absence of patronage.’

Turning over these bills leisurely, lingering at times on famous names, before fame had crowned their efforts, it is impossible to resist the feeling that the theatrical world, despite its assiduous endeavour to produce novelties, changes little, if at all. At best, it runs in cycles. There were tableaux vivants, living pictures,

living statuary, and all the marvels of the music-halls a century ago, and even further back ; mingled with the plays, as again to-day, in those houses of entertainment which are both theatres and music-halls, were wire-walkers, pistol-firing and flag-wagging acrobats, contortionists, tumblers (with double 'somersets'), Chinese and Indian jugglers, conjurors, strong men who stretched themselves rigid with head on one chair and heels on another and permitted members of the audience to beat anvils on their bodies, men who walked on bottles and on the ceiling head downward, child prodigies, ventriloquists, sword-swallowers, lightning calculators, musical-glass players, mimics—with all their tricks most minutely described. The conjurors and the mimics were the most marvellous : a Mr. Barnett in 1824 'will render anybody invisible and will make an article be found in any part of the town.' In Oxford he conjured something to the top of the University church—not much different all this from sawing a woman in two, as nowadays. Signor Rosignolle, who in 1775 played on a violin without strings, was obviously a mimic, for he also imitated birds. In 1822 in Newcastle, Wilson, aged 56, walked a measured mile on the stage in 6½ minutes. There were trap-door and mechanical effects in pantomime—animated serpent, magic candle and lantern, talking-head (which falls to pieces), sea-fights, transparencies, fireworks, cascades with real water, and live animals in abundance.

Special plays were written for those animals. One Coney travelled with two dogs, Hector and Bruin, which were starred and duly took benefits. They were not content to appear as dogs only, even when they performed such great dramatic feats as seizing a lighted torch to prevent the blowing up of a powder magazine ; Bruin, 'clothed in a real lion's skin,' was a lion in one play—I have seen the same thing in a modern music-hall sketch. In 'The Elephant of Siam,' a real elephant 'will distribute flowers, will walk round the stage on her knees, and carry any twelve of the audience on her back.' In the great scene 'she snatches the crown from the head of the usurper and places it on the head of the rightful prince, and triumphantly carries him off over the heads of his enemies.' There were human rivals to these four-footed actors. Gouffe, the man-monkey, appeared in a gorilla play ; so did Chung Lau Lauro, the Chinese strong man and conjuror, in 'The Ape of the Carribbee Islands.' Signor Hervio Nano, in the 'Man Fly' and 'King of the Gnomes,' was both a gnome and a baboon. This sort of play is still in vogue, and not merely on the music-halls. Not

many years ago, I saw an American melodrama in which dogs worked railway signals, among other things, to save the heroine from a terrible fate.

Even the joy-plank of revue is no modern innovation. Eighty years ago it was a feature of the production of 'The Jewess,' sometimes billed as the 'Real Jewess'—to distinguish it from some apostate version presumably—in which the sumptuous processions of the Inquisition took place on a narrow platform running round the pit. Managers were candid, too, in those days with regard to their spectacular Shakespearian productions; an 'historical, bombastical, musical and completely illegitimate tragedy' was the description of a version of 'Richard III.' in Leeds in 1844, nevertheless announced as 'Shakespeare for the million, on a scale of prodigious splendour.'

One real novelty I have discovered is in the Sheffield bills for 1840, a frankly commercial method of securing a stage crowd. When 'Gustavus III,' or 'The Masked Ball,' was played, the stage was thrown open to the public in the masquerade scene—gentlemen's character tickets, 3s. 6d., ladies gratis, and 'admission without a mask will be peremptorily refused.'

Theatre patrons of the old days gave managers and artists plenty of latitude, but they insisted on straightforwardness, and stars were constantly reminded that if they had claims to homage they also had obligations. Nobody demands to-day that an actress should be 'penetrated with gratitude,' as Mrs. Abington was on a Birmingham bill of 1798, or even that a modern equivalent in thanks should be used; but the announcement, repeated several days, on the Sheffield bills of 1842, that the manager has received a letter from a solicitor, 'confirming the statement made by Mr. Brooke and read to the audience on Tuesday last, respecting his inability to appear in time to represent Richard the Third, it is therefore due to Mr. B. to assure the public that his absence on that occasion was not caused by negligence or premeditation,' doubtless had a salutary effect on would-be recalcitrants. It indicates that the public has but itself to blame if nowadays advantage is taken of its indulgent worship.



## THE ROOM.

BY H. M. LEYS.

'You all agree, then?' asked Massingham, looking round at his guests.

'Quite, quite,' said young Grindley of Brasenose.

'I am ready to fall in,' said the Parson.

Vernon merely grunted. Really, after a dinner like that it was a beastly shame to chatter.

'I'll do it, of course,' said Reece, the tubby little curate whom Massingham had invited more out of cussedness than anything.

'All right, then. Mind, I don't guarantee that there is a ghost. I'm only going on local gossip and the fact that it's so damned hard to get any servants. And the house-agents, of course.'

'You don't mean to say that *they* admit there's a ghost?' asked Ladislaw.

'No,' grinned Massingham; 'I'm going by what they didn't say. . . . By the way, are you coming in, Mac?'

Ladislaw flushed.

'I—of course I will, if that's part of the bargain,' he said a little doubtfully.

'My dear chap,' drawled Grindley, 'surely—I mean, I know people who think there's something in it and that, but *surely*—?'

'I don't know,' blurted Ladislaw. 'Oh well, of course no one believes in the white-sheet-and-clanking-chains ghost; but—no, perhaps there aren't any in England,' he ended abruptly.

They shouted with laughter. Ladislaw had in him the blood of generations of Highlanders, fanatical in their isolation and pride. Ladislaw grinned shamefacedly. He knew—well, perhaps he knew more than the others.

'Well, since we're all agreed,' said Massingham briskly, 'the next thing to do is to draw lots as to the order we go in. And look here,' he added, reddening a little, 'if anyone feels, when it comes to the point, that—that he'd rather drop it, you know, we'd—well, nobody'd think the worse of him.' He looked round a little shamefacedly. 'I don't want any nervous wrecks on my conscience,' he added with a half-laugh.

Everybody smiled in his own individual fashion—Grindley just

a trifle superior, Ladislav sympathetic, the Parson very kind and indulgent, Vernon bored, and Reece with the spontaneity of a child. Massingham, his duty done, looked relieved.

'Let's draw, then,' he said. 'I'll put all our names in this'—he tipped out the cigars from the box—'and numbers from one to—let's see—six, in this.' He took a clean tumbler off the tray. Then he drew out his pocket-book and tore out two leaves which he again tore, each into six pieces. On one set he wrote numbers, on the other names. Then, folding up the scraps, he dropped one set into the box and the other into the tumbler.

'Now, let's see—Reece, you're the most transparently honest. You draw.'

Reece jogged his chair up, his face beaming like a small boy at a conjuring show.

'What do I do?' he asked eagerly.

'You take one paper out of the box and another out of the glass and open them.'

Reece obeyed.

'Amory,' he said, opening one—'three.'

The Parson smiled, still indulgent. 'So two of you experience the ghost before I do,' he said.

Reece went on with the drawing.

'Ladislav—four,' he said. 'Grindley—one.'

'Good old Grindley!' 'Do down the spook, Grinders!' 'Leave some for me!' vociferated the crowd, now thoroughly aroused.

'Reece—six. Oh, I did hope I'd be fairly early! Never mind. Vernon—two. Massingham—five. That's all.' Reece beamed round on the company, polishing his circular steel-rimmed spectacles, rosy with excitement.

'Then I take it the order is Grindley, Vernon, myself, Ladislav, Massingham, Reece,' said the Parson. 'Upon my word, I hope something will come of it. I rather envy you, Grindley—and you, Reece.' Then he drew Reece a little aside. 'I mean to exorcise anything I see,' he said in a low voice. 'Did you think of doing that? I'm quite willing to come last if—the others really want to find out if they can see anything.'

'Just as you like,' said Reece. 'But won't your exorcism have a better chance of proof if you try it on somewhere in the middle? I mean, say Grindley and Vernon—er—see something, and Ladislav and Massingham and I don't—'

'Yes, you're right,' said Amory, with more animation than usual. 'It's best as it is. It's a clearer proof of the truth. Yes, Reece, you're quite right. Thank you.'

His eyes had a curious gleam—the light of the fanatic, eager, bright and hard—in them.

'Lord! I pity the poor ghost when Amory once gets going,' said Vernon with a short laugh. 'I shouldn't like to be up against you when you were really mad, old man.'

'Oh, come!' said Amory, flushing a little, with a rather shame-faced laugh. 'It's only when I'm sure that I'm face to face with something really evil that I get angry. Then, I admit, I'm—er—'

'Implacable,' put in Grindley. 'It's most extraordinary,' he went on, 'how people seem to take a pride in certain of their—well, faults. Look at Massingham, now: he's got an absolute devil of a temper—I wouldn't answer for the safety of anyone who roused him—but I don't mind betting that he'll not only own to it, but be quite proud of it.'

'Eh, what's that?' asked Massingham from the sideboard. 'What's that about me?'

'Isn't it true that you're rather hot-tempered?' drawled Grindley.

'Got a brute of a temper,' answered Massingham cheerfully. 'Fact, when I do get going I absolutely see red.' He turned back to the syphon.

Grindley smiled faintly.

'I believe anger and pride are deadly sins, aren't they, Amory?—and no one minds owning to 'em; in fact, most people rather like being accused of 'em. But if I were to say that Vernon was a greedy sensualist, or that you, Amory, were the most damnably narrow, uncharitable brute I'd ever met, you'd be quite annoyed. Here's an example, now,' went on the youthful moralist. 'You know that pretty maid Lily who used to wait at dinner? What's become of her?'

'Left,' growled Massingham. 'She—er—well, you know. Pity, too, for I don't think she was a real bad 'un. Pretty girls don't stand much chance in country villages.'

'Exactly,' said Grindley. 'It wasn't, probably, her fault at all, if you can call it a fault to follow the dictates of Nature; yet she gets kicked downhill by the likes of us.'

'Really, Grindley,' said Amory, his thin face pale, 'I know

it's the fashion to be cynical about these things, but I consider it most immoral to take any but the strongest views on such a subject. If I had my way I should so deal with these cases as to prevent effectually their ever occurring again.'

'Oh, come now, Amory!' broke in Vernon. 'The cart-tail and whipping-post, eh? Damn it all, man, it's nature! Why, even in the Bible isn't there a woman—a real bad lot, too—who—er—got let off, don't you know?'

'If you mean the eighth chapter of St. John's Gospel,' said Amory coldly, 'most critics agree that it's not authentic. I believe the Romans admit it to be an interpolation. And in any case, there was no condoning of the crime: the woman was told to "sin no more," not that it was "natural" and therefore not worthy of blame.'

'Oh, well,' yawned Vernon, 'we all know that it's you Christians who go in for whips and tortures and burnings alive. Poor degraded sensualists like myself believe in the motto "Live and let live."'

Amory opened his mouth for an indignant reply, but Massingham cut in.

'I suppose we all show up on a question of that kind,' he said philosophically. 'Amory'd do anything—anything at all—to punish transgressors—eh, Amory?' The Parson nodded. 'Old Vernon says "Let 'em, if they want to. It don't hurt anyone else." (Please stop me if I'm misjudging anyone.) Grindley says "It's below me, of course, vulgar and that: but I believe it's natural, like over-eating or getting drunk." I—well, I dislike the whole thing thoroughly, but I can't help thinking it's a necessary evil. As for Ladislav, I don't believe he even knows it exists, or if he does he's so disgusted he shuts it out of his existence. Reece—I'm blessed if I know what Reece thinks.'

'I think,' said Reece, very pink and hot, and stammering in his confusion, 'that it's a horrible thing, like d—deformity, that we are responsible for, just as we are for c—consumption or drink. It's b—beastly, but it's our f—fault, and we've got to s—stop it. And I'm af—fraid I don't quite agree with you, Amory, that p—punishment stops it. It's d—decency in people's lives that p—prevents it. And we've got to see that they have a chance to—well, to live c—clean. I say, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to jaw like that.' He collapsed into a deep arm-chair.

Grindley yawned.

'I'd no idea I'd uncork such deep vials of emotion and opinion,' he said in his most irritating voice. 'Shall we chuck it?' He lit a cigarette. 'By the way, Masser, I suppose the—er—experiment begins to-night?'

'Just as you like,' said Massingham. 'It's your look-out, since you're the first on the list.'

'Oh, well, I'll begin at once,' said Grindley, rising. 'I only hope they've made me up a decent bed. I believe that's really why people can't sleep in haunted rooms—maids won't take any trouble with the beds. Good-night, you men.'

'Night, old chap.' 'Mind you have a good yarn for us to-morrow night.' 'Don't sleep right through the show, lazy swine.' 'Call out if you're frightened.'

And so young Oxford went up to encounter the spirits of all time.

'If it wasn't that I'd promised,' said Grindley next evening, with an abruptness strange to him, 'I'd never say a word. And, mind, it isn't what you expect, any of you. I didn't see a thing.'

His eyes, flickering and dark in his white face, glanced nervously round the group of men. He passed his tongue rapidly over his lips.

'But—something happened?' asked Vernon.

'Yes—oh yes! Something happened all right. But what it was I don't know—a dream, or a vision, or—an incarnation.'

They looked at him intently. Could this nervous boy be the calm and slightly superior Grindley who had talked so fluently and well of the power of the trained intellect?

'P'raps once I tell you I'll get over it a bit,' he broke out at last. 'I think I'm—possessed. . . . No, I mean it absolutely literally. I never guessed before what it meant. . . .'

'I didn't take long over going to bed. It's a pleasant enough room, you know, and I was a bit sleepy after the warmth and the talking and that, and I never for a moment thought I'd be disturbed. If I'd known, nothing in this world—or the next—would ever have persuaded me to sleep in that cursed—yes, I mean it, *cursed*—room.'

He paused a moment, trying to recover some of his wonted calm.

'Well, I went to bed, and, I suppose, to sleep. I never before quite understood what Hamlet meant about the dreams that might

come when you're lying in the grave, dead. I thought I did, but I didn't. And he only guessed what the dreams of death might be. I know. . . .

'I don't mean you to think that I just had a bad dream. I quite literally *became someone else*—in every nerve of my body, in every thought of my mind—yes, and in every secret wish of my heart. I knew myself intimately. I was myself in another incarnation, older, stronger, freer, nearer to elemental things, but still myself. . . . I wish I could make you understand !'

He broke off abruptly, and as abruptly resumed :

'Of course you all know the story of Dr. Faustus. It's a fine, dramatic story, you think, and Marlowe made a glorious, marvellous poem of it. You don't know—thank God every day of your lives that you don't know—what a fearful story it is. I do know. Last night—and God only knows how long before—I *was* that man.'

He gulped.

'I—I'd done it, you know. I'd abandoned all goodness : I'd made my intellect, *mine*, my God, and worshipped it. I'd blasphemed, and—I had sold my soul.

'I can't attempt to tell you what it was like. You couldn't ever imagine it if you hadn't felt it. I was terrified at what I'd done. I was the living home of everything evil—I tell you, I was evil through and through, as if some fearful vapour had surrounded and soaked me. And—I was *afraid*. I tried to pray, and I knew it was hopeless. How could I hope to be heard ? Oh, it's easy to talk of Despair—you don't know, you can never guess, what it is ! I fought and struggled. I began broken prayers, and abandoned them at the first word, knowing I couldn't pray. . . .

'I can't tell you how long it lasted. I lived a whole spiritual life through. No words can tell you what it was—it was a living hell, and it's—it's heaven to be awake.'

'Grindley, old chap,' said Reece softly, 'it—it wasn't *you*, you know. It was some evil outside of you. It wasn't the real you.'

Grindley turned a haggard face.

'It was—a possible me. I might have been—I nearly was—just that, blasphemous, hopeless. But—I know in time. . . . I'm going out,' he added abruptly. 'Reece, will you come ?'

Reece rose—Reece, on whom Grindley had often exercised a pretty wit ; Reece the plain, the stupid, the comical and the kindly ; and, without a word, they set out together.



The others lit pipes and cigarettes, poked the fire, mixed drinks ; they breathed more freely.

'Pon my word,' said Vernon between puffs, 'I'd no idea Grindley was such a kid. 'Xpect he was horribly jumpy the whole time. Poor kid, he's beastly upset! And all about a dream!'

'Well, but it must have been a horribly vivid and peculiarly beastly dream,' said Massingham. 'He looks quite changed. Poor old Grindley!'

'Why "poor"?' asked Ladislav. 'I call him lucky.'

'*Lucky!*' exclaimed two or three of the others. And 'How d'you make that out?' asked Vernon.

'Well—he knows in time. He's warned. It *was* in him, you know—that ambition and pride of intellect. Well—he's cured.'

'Want to back out, Vernon?' asked Massingham, grinning. 'Your shot to-night, you know. Don't think there's much chance of your letting your ambition and intellect sell *your* soul to the devil, you lazy swine. You'll sell it another way.'

Vernon grinned blandly.

'If the bed's warm and comfortable I'll be all right, thanks,' he yawned. 'Don't mind how soon I get off, either. Say good-night to the others for me, will you?'

He rose, stretching his arms, a fine figure of a man, verging on the corpulent, a little spoilt by good living, but handsome still.

It was very late when Grindley and Reece returned. They went upstairs, still together.

Everyone noticed how odd Vernon looked at breakfast. He did not look terrified and—yes, possessed—like Grindley; he looked like a man who has been brought face to face with some disgusting sight—white and shaken and sick. He ate nothing; he sat and crumbled bread with trembling fingers, and every now and then he would lift his eyes and look at one or another of them in a queer appealing way, as if he were guilty of some sin, and sorry for it, and his friends were his judges.

Everybody was a little uncomfortable and ill at ease: it was so odd to see Vernon, the debonair and confident Vernon, so piteously shaken. Breakfast was a hasty meal, for everyone was anxious to get it over and escape from those troubled questioning eyes.

But as chairs were pushed back and pipes lighted, Vernon suddenly spoke.

'I'm not going to make any story for you chaps to-night,' he said abruptly. 'There isn't one—for you. Yes, I've seen something. And I shan't forget what I've seen, as long as I live.' Sweat started out on his forehead. 'I'm not going to try and tell you what it was,' he went on jerkily. 'I'd as soon try to describe the most loathsome surgical operation or the most indecent physical illness. And if I wanted to, I couldn't. Thank Heaven, we haven't made the words for what I saw.'

Eyes met startled eyes over the untidy table. It was mad, the whole business—a ghost hinted at while the remains of breakfast still littered the table; Vernon, of all people, confused, ashamed, disgusted, and—yes—penitent.

'Grindley was right,' said Vernon heavily; 'that place is cursed. And he's right, too, when he says that no one who hasn't tried can even guess what evil it puts into your mind, and how it brings out the vile things you have in your own soul. Only I'd rather have had his—dream, or incarnation, or whatever it was, than——'

There was silence in the room. Suddenly Vernon stood up. Involuntarily everyone looked at him—at the handsome face, now tormented with a kind of passion of disgust and remorse, at the haunted eyes that used to be so gay.

'I'm—I'm not so bad as that yet!' he cried with a sound like a sob, and left them sitting there.

Grindley rose, and soon was seen passing the window, making for the stables. Ladislav sat with bowed head, contemplating his plate. Reece and Amory murmured together, and Massingham caught the words 'holy water.' He got up and went across to them.

'I say, you men, shall we drop it?' he asked. He was quite pale. 'Grindley's collapse didn't altogether surprise me, but when poor old Vernon gets bowled over like this it's too much of a good thing. He looks ghastly. I didn't think he had it in him to feel like that.'

The others glanced at one another.

'There must be some—well, influence or something—in that room,' Massingham continued. 'Something pretty awful, too. And I don't want anybody to go in there just out of bravado and get—well, damaged.'

'I agree,' said the Parson gravely, 'that there must be something evil in that room. It's not contrary to dogma to believe that

some places are soaked, as it were, in evil influence. But that's all the more reason, Massingham, for me to spend the night there. If exorcism and prayer can lay your ghost, I promise you it shall be laid.'

'I know you're not afraid,' said Massingham. 'I'll admit that in a way it's your job. But, Amory, you know that young Grindley wasn't just a frightened kid last night. Something *had* happened to him—something pretty awful. And God only knows what it can have been that poor old Vernon saw. He's horrified—and I should have said that no god or devil could horrify Vernon.'

'Whatever it is,' said Amory steadily—'and I don't think we can deny that there is something—it's not stronger, nor half as strong, as the Powers that will be on my side. I am going into that room to-night, Massingham, convinced that there is in it some shocking evil, and equally convinced that I shall overcome it. It cannot withstand the minister of God.'

Massingham flushed, as some men do when asked to talk familiarly of God. He preferred to speak of Providence.

'Well, Amory, you know best,' he said. 'Do as you think right. Only, for Heaven's sake, if you feel the smallest reluctance when it comes to the point, do chuck it! Swear you will.'

'I am going to lay that spirit,' said the Parson, steadily as ever, but with a set mouth and a light in his eyes that warned Massingham that remonstrance was useless. He shrugged his shoulders.

'It's a pity you weren't born in the days of martyrs, Amory,' he remarked. 'You'd have enjoyed going to the stake for your principles.'

Amory said nothing. Perhaps it was as well.

. . . . .

There was an unusual silence in the smoking-room that night. Grindley had been out in the wind and rain all day, and looked more his normal self, though there was an odd hesitation in his manner and dread still lurked in his eyes. He glanced over his shoulder often, like a man who fears a horrible presence at his elbow; and he kept close to Reece. Vernon sat, his head sunk between his shoulders, staring sombrely at the fire. No one knew where he had been all that long and dreary day. The Parson sat apart, reading with moving lips, a look of exaltation on his face. Ladislav and Massingham made an idle pretence at talk.

Suddenly Amory rose.

'Good-night, all of you,' he said. 'It will be all right in the morning.'

Massingham got slowly to his feet.

'Amory,' he began doubtfully; but the Parson's eyes were bright and his face transfigured.

'Hush, Massingham,' he said. 'Nothing you can say shall stop me. This is my duty, and I shall do it. I will crush this evil thing down into the everlasting fire of punishment——'

A quick cry broke in on him.

'Don't! Don't talk of everlasting punishment! You don't know what it means. God wouldn't—He *couldn't*——'

Amory smiled.

'Grindley, God is, before all, just. Evil must receive its reward. By God's grace, I hope to be His minister in dealing out that punishment.'

Massingham looked at him heavily.

'Well—good luck,' he said. Amory smiled, an odd smile of confidence, pity, and triumph. The door closed softly behind him.

For a few minutes there was silence. Then Grindley whispered:

'He can't *really* believe there's a God like that?'

No one answered; then Vernon, speaking for the first time that evening, muttered:

'Some evil deserves—anything.'

He rose heavily and went out. A little later Grindley caught Reece's eye: the little curate laid down his book, and without a word the odd pair left the room together. Massingham and Ladislav sat on and on in silence, Massingham smoking sombrely, Ladislav nervously touching up the fire.

At last the Scotsman dropped the poker with a clatter.

'Massingham,' he said in a queer strained voice, 'I can't bear this. What do you imagine is going on in there?'

Massingham stirred.

'God only knows!' he said. Then he added suddenly:

'I'm going to listen. Don't you come, Mac. I'd rather you didn't.'

He went out, and Ladislav heard his steps mounting the stairs, going along the corridor, fading into silence. In the smoking-room the fire sank lower and the ashes fell softly.

In a few minutes Massingham returned, paler, and looking a little apprehensive.

'Well?' asked Ladislav.

'There's—something awful going on in there,' said Massingham jerkily. 'I don't know what. I heard Amory's voice—and hard breathing, and a kind of ghastly muffled moaning noise—'

Ladislav sprang up.

'Moaning? Amory?'

Massingham shook his head.

'Amory's voice was steady enough,' he said. 'It was like steel—ice—I don't know. . . . *He* wasn't the—thing—that moaned.'

Ladislav shuddered.

'Could you hear what he said?'

'Not—entirely,' said Massingham reluctantly. He wiped his forehead, and Ladislav saw that his hand shook.

The two men stared into each other's eyes.

'There was a smell like scorching,' added Massingham suddenly, 'and a horrible sound, like something cracking very slowly—or crushing, p'r'aps.'

Again they stood in silence, straining their ears.

'Oh, for God's sake, let's go and stop it!' cried Ladislav abruptly; and both men turned on an impulse and ran up the shallow wooden stairs.

At the top they came face to face with Amory himself. He stood staring blindly before him, his skin stretched and white over the bones of his face, his eyes wide and blank and horrified.

'Amory! Thank God you're here!' cried Massingham.

Amory stared on silently. Then suddenly he spoke.

'*The tears ran down over my hands,*' he said in an odd, strained voice. He held his hands, thin and dry and rigid, a little before him. Massingham and Ladislav looked at them instinctively. Then Ladislav touched Amory gently on the shoulder.

'Come away, man,' he said in his soft Highland voice.

The lids blinked rapidly once over Amory's blank staring eyes. Otherwise he did not move. Ladislav slipped his hand through the rigid arm. Together he and Massingham got Amory down the stairs.

The clock struck three as they passed through the hall, and the sound seemed to rouse Amory from his stupor of horror. He passed a hand rapidly over his face, and then looked in an odd bewildered way at the concerned faces of his two friends. He shuddered a little.

'Massingham——' he said in a troubled voice.

'Yes, Amory; all right, old chap,' said Massingham.

'Massingham—oh, Massingham, the tears ran down over my hands. I went on, and the tears ran down over my hands.'

They sat with him till day came, a watery yellow rim between the wet earth and the weeping sky. They could hear the little sound as he passed his tongue over his dry lips.

. . . . .

The next day was Sunday. When Massingham's guests first came, there had been some talk of Amory's preaching in the village church to relieve the vicar, an old man in feeble health; but Massingham hardly liked to broach the subject to a man so utterly broken as Amory. But it seemed that he himself had not forgotten. He appeared at the breakfast-table, exhausted and livid, but composed; and at the end of the meal—through which he sat, silent and nervous, looking like a man who has passed through an agony of humiliation—he suddenly spoke:

'What time is the service, Massingham?'

'Eleven. But, I say, Amory, you're not fit to preach.'

'I know. I'm utterly unfit. But I must preach to-day, if I never enter a pulpit again.'

'But, Amory, you're ill—done in. You ought to rest.'

'Rest!' said Amory, raising his head for the first time; and at the look in his tortured eyes Massingham dropped his own.

It was an odd sermon, prefaced not by a single text, but by a reading from St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians—that famous passage that deals with charity. And Amory spoke in a voice strained to the point of quivering of the guilt of those who condemn their brothers. His usual beautiful style was gone. His sentences were harsh, abrupt, and broken. There was one strange passage, which he delivered as if under appalling physical stress, his white-knuckled hands clutching the pulpit, sweat beading his brow and lips.

'Years ago,' he said, 'men tried to convert their opponents by torture. They showed them the human version of hell. They ground their bones, scorched their flesh, tore their eyes.' (Here he turned ashy white to the lips.) 'The tears of their victims wetted their hands, and they lifted those hands, wet with tears and blood, to God, the merciful God, to ask His blessing and His help. We torture souls in the same Name. We condemn them to a lingering death of torture by despair. I have tortured a soul to death—crushed it, broken——' He stopped, gasped audibly, opened his



mouth once or twice, and then added abruptly, 'Be merciful. You don't know—you can't judge other souls. Have mercy, always.' He paused again, and then, in the astonished silence of the country church, abruptly left the pulpit.

That was the only reference he made to the appalling happenings of that night.

In the afternoon Ladislav, Massingham and Vernon sat together at one end of the long library. Reece and Grindley, at the far end, talked together; Amory alone was absent.

'I say,' said Massingham a little awkwardly, 'don't you chaps think we've gone far enough? I mean, there's not much point in crocking ourselves over this confounded business, is there? Look at Reece, for instance; we don't want to push a simple-minded kid like that into this hell-hole. What do you think?'

'Reece won't hurt,' said Vernon heavily.

'Oh, I don't know,' said Massingham. 'He's more sensitive than you'd think. Look what he's done for poor old Grindley. What do you say, Mac?'

'No one ought to go near that room,' cried Ladislav fiercely. 'You're right, Massingham—hell-hole's the word for it.'

Vernon opened his mouth and closed it without speaking.

'I'm not going!' said Ladislav. 'It's my turn to-night, isn't it? Well, I've got pluck enough not to go.'

Vernon looked up at him with an odd questioning glance, and their eyes met.

'You know?' asked Vernon.

Ladislav nodded. 'Enough,' he said. 'I've seen things—at home. I know what might—anyway, I'm not going.'

He rose and went towards the door; then he turned back.

'What about you, Massingham? Will you be wise in time and chuck it too?'

Massingham flushed a little.

'No, I don't think I'll chuck it,' he said slowly. 'Oh, I'm in a funk all right! But I can't exactly ask people here, and make them face—whatever's in that room—and not go myself, can I?'

Vernon suddenly broke in.

'Massingham—don't,' he said, laying his hand on the other man's arm. 'We who've been—we'll understand. And Ladislav will.'

Massingham looked at him intently.

'I think I must go, Vernon,' he said very quietly. 'Besides, if Reece, why not I?'

Vernon got rather red.

'Look here,' he said, 'I've been, and I know what I'm talking about. Reece will be all right; but you——! Don't ask why, Dick, but don't—don't go into that damned place.'

Massingham looked gravely at Vernon's pleading face, and shook his head.

'I'm sorry, Bill,' he said. Vernon stared with a kind of hopeless entreaty into his face, then turned away with a half-groan.

At eleven that night Massingham went to face his ordeal.

Massingham said nothing of his experiences when he joined his friends next day. Like those who had already met Fate in that room of his, he was very pale, and his eyes had that same piteous look—the look of one who has sinned past hope of forgiveness, and yet hopes, however faintly, that his friends may not cast him out. He spoke very little, and not at all of the subject that lay uppermost in all their minds. Only, when dusk was falling, and they all sat together in the long library, he said suddenly, breaking into the conversation with the manner of a man who has been totally abstracted:

'Reece, I want to ask something of you.'

'Yes?' said Reece in his commonplace tone of cheerful willingness.

'Don't go into that ghastly room to-night.'

The other voices had all died away, as does ordinary talk when the speakers hear the voice of a dying man. But Massingham's request was like the releasing of a spring—as if they had been waiting for a signal.

Amory spoke first.

'Reece, he's right,' he said in a very gentle voice. 'It's not necessary, and it's——' He gulped.

'Yes, Reece,' chimed in Ladislaw, 'don't go. Let me have a companion in my cowardice!' he added, with a half-laugh.

Grindley said nothing, but he looked at the little curate with a glance oddly compounded of confidence and entreaty, admiration and fear.

Reece looked at Vernon.

'What do you think, Vernon?' he asked.

Vernon hesitated; then:

'Go, if you like, I say,' he said. 'It's not as if you were—like the rest of us.'

'Vernon!' broke in Massingham sharply. He knew that the two were utterly opposed, but really . . . ! 'Don't listen to him, Reece. Don't go. I tell you it's ghastly. No one can imagine it.' He became very pale. 'Don't go,' he urged again.

Reece was still looking steadily into Vernon's eyes; neither wavered. Then the little curate turned to Massingham.

'I'm sorry, Massingham,' he said, 'but if you don't mind, I'd like to go. All the rest of you have been.'

'Oh, if that's the way you look at it!' exclaimed Massingham bitterly. Then his voice dropped and sounded weary. 'Have it your own way,' he muttered. 'I suppose it's your own look-out. You've been warned.' He walked away.

The others glanced at each other. Was it of any use to say any more? Then they gave it up. After all, simple as he was, Reece was not a child.

Still, they all felt horribly uncomfortable when, shortly before eleven, Reece laid down the copy of *Punch* over which he had been chuckling for nearly an hour, and rose.

'Good-night, you chaps,' he said. 'See you in the morning.'

Grindley half rose; Reece caught his eye and grinned.

'Night,' he said again, and went out.

The others with one accord drew together round the fire. For a few minutes no one spoke.

'Good lord!' said Massingham suddenly. 'I think this is the most horrible thing that's happened yet. He's such an utter kid to go into that pit of evil. He doesn't know—anything.'

'If you come to that,' said Amory, 'I don't think any of us really knew what evil was. There's something in that room—God only knows what—some loathsome spirit of evil—that fills you until you become evil incarnate.'

'There is—you're right!' cried Grindley excitedly. 'You are—cut off. It's appalling—'

'It is appalling,' said Massingham slowly, 'to know that one is cut off oneself from hope of mercy or forgiveness. It is worse to cut off someone else.'

They looked at him attentively.

'When one lets go the reins—allows blind fury to possess one

utterly,' said Massingham, still in that slow, almost detached voice, 'one does not only kill one's own soul. There's the other soul. It's let out of the dead, heavy body—a damned soul, reproaching you for its damnation. And you can do nothing—nothing! It's—oh, I can't tell you! There aren't human words for a thing like that, which is inhuman.'

The others remained silent.

'Have you ever thought,' added Massingham abruptly, 'how terrible it must be to be God? To know things like that, and let them be, because they're just?'

'God is merciful first and just afterwards,' said Amory. 'I know I used to say the reverse, but now I know better.'

'You may be right,' said Massingham. 'There must be an amazing amount of goodness somewhere when there is such a quantity of unspeakable evil in men like us, who thought ourselves decent fellows enough.'

Grindley moved impatiently.

'There is,' he said; 'I know there is. But I can't bear to think of that horror of evil, which we all know of, let loose on Reece. He knows all I could tell him, but you can't *tell* about——'

'No, you can't,' agreed Amory.

'What I can't understand,' said Massingham, 'was why you were so—well, so callous—about it, Vernon. You had as ghastly a time as any of us, and yet, when you could have dissuaded that kid—for you could have dissuaded him, only you could—you let him go on.'

'It's like this,' said Vernon, and the others were astonished at the gentleness of his voice. 'Since—that night—I've felt the most tremendous reverence for innocence—purity of mind and thought. It seems to me that evil can't touch it, but it might touch evil. Do you see what I mean?—You do, Amory.'

'Y—yes, I do,' admitted the Parson; 'but—oh, Vernon, it's the most ghastly risk! None of us ever guessed what would happen to the others, and we were more or less intimate with them. Now we know—(a little: we shall never know really)—what each has gone through; we can see how it worked. That room is so evil that when a man goes into it all the worst in him is drawn out. He is himself still, but filled and soaked with evil passions. He becomes vice incarnate——'

'Yes!' cried Vernon; 'that's it!'

'What evil is in Reece?' asked Ladislav.

They were silent a little, and then Grindley said apologetically :  
' You see, one knows him so little. As Amory said, we aren't intimate with him, any of us. We've only been in close contact with him just lately, when we're all abnormal. I don't know—I hate to think of him alone up there, unsuspecting——'

They fell silent again, like men who anxiously await news. Suddenly Ladislaw rose and went and opened the door. They all listened intently. The house was utterly still.

Ladislaw came back, but he left the door open. ' Just in case,' he murmured, half-apologetically.

The night wore on. Somehow no one cared to go to bed. With the others it had been different—they could look after themselves ; but they all felt a queer responsibility for Reece. He was such a kid, they kept saying, and the danger was so horrible. The dead silence of the house, dark and brooding beyond the open door of the warm and well-lit smoking-room, was terrible. Reece was out there, alone. . . .

Dawn showed grey at last, and slowly the night lifted. The five men had been silent for the last hour or more. Now they looked dully, almost hopelessly, at each other's faces, grey in the early light, and silently they rose. It was over. Whatever had happened was ended.

They all felt a shock of surprise, relief—yes, and delight—when Reece came into the dining-room. He looked round at their drawn faces with concern.

' I say—is anything wrong ? ' he asked.

' No,' said Massingham, with a half-laugh. ' No ; not if you're all right.'

' Oh, I'm all right,' said the little curate cheerfully. ' Never slept better in my life, and that's saying a lot.'

' Then, you saw—— ? ' began Grindley.

' I didn't see a thing,' said Reece half-regretfully. ' Something missing in my make-up, I expect. It is a pity ! However, I've had my chance.'

And he fell hungrily on his breakfast.

## KRISHNA GOWDA

A PLANTER in the northern talugs of Mysore has little opportunity of associating with the finest and most interesting types of native that go to make India's motley population. The planter deals with a few nondescript lower castes forming the coolie community, with the addition of a few high-caste men among the Munshis and Local Government officials. The nature of the work bringing him continually in actual but not personal contact with these few jâts, leaves him, after years among them, very ignorant of their sullen, suspicious natures. Indians, naturally reticent, do not encourage any effort on the part of a European to probe the innermost workings of their primitive minds; and, except by casual observation and the closer contact which illness brings, a planter seldom has the chance of getting nearer the evasive disposition of his coolies. By the time evening arrives he is probably too tired to enthuse in any great effort to investigate local folklore and caste peculiarities, preferring a long-chair and a pipe. But there are occasions when he wishes to fathom what appear to be foolish superstitions with no grounds for existence, merely the inclination on his part to learn as much as possible about the people among whom it is his lot to live.

Being in much the same position as any other planter, I often found myself towards sundown casting about for some occupation of an easy but distracting nature. Generally disinclined to tramp out in search of jungle fowl, and afraid to lose interest in my one hobby by overworking it, I found the periodic visits of a Gowda, Krishna by name, thoroughly agreeable.

An old man, typical of a caste whose members are free from the wretched studied servility and insincere politeness so often characteristics of other castes. His quiet manner and proud bearing, together with his graceful speech, of pure Canarese, at first stimulated my curiosity and gradually turned that to interest. As we became better acquainted, a mutual liking sprang up, which increased with time.

I made Krishna Gowda's acquaintance several weeks after my arrival on the estate. About five in the evening during a hot day of May, I was sitting smoking a pipe on the veranda of my



bungalow, looking out over the dense jungle-covered hills that stretched away to the bare ridge of the Western Ghats on the horizon. Watching the dying sunlight play on the tree-tops of the jungle proved far more fascinating than trying to absorb the ill-expressed description of perplexities confronting an American whose son had eloped with his second wife, which formed the plot of the novel on my knee. While dreamily looking at my surroundings and listening to the countless sounds coming from the jungle near by, I became aware of a Gowda standing a few paces away from the veranda steps. When he saw I was looking at him he made a deep salaam and, coming up the steps, placed a single lime at my feet, then withdrawing, salaamed again.

By doing this he had expressed the recognition of my superiority of caste. He had avoided touching me by placing the lime on the ground and not in my hand. In this way he had not defiled my caste, though under different circumstances and with another present, his attitude would have indicated superiority on his part. Thanking him, I took up the lime. After a few questions about the coming monsoon, the prospects of the coffee and paddy crops, Krishna asked if he might listen to the gramophone if I happened to be going to play it, if it would not disturb me and prevent me from gaining knowledge from the book. Had he seen the title of the book and been able to read its contents, I am afraid his simple conviction that books only taught would have been rudely shattered.

Relieved to find he was not seeking financial aid, which was usually the aim of native visitors to my bungalow, I started up the gramophone.

Squatting in the shade of the bungalow, the Gowda listened patiently to over a dozen records, and only when Caruso delivered a magnificent finale, which in real life would have brought down the Albert Hall, did Krishna allow a smile to creep over his features, which, until then, had remained immobile in the cold, non-committal expression peculiar to many Orientals. Under pretence of reading, I watched the old Gowda. He possessed a big frame, thin as the majority of Hindus, with light loins and sharp-cut features. His nose was hooked, a characteristic of his caste. His thin, long tapering fingers were more suited to an artist than to a man destined in life to follow a wooden plough laboriously through swampy paddy-fields, literally slaving to exist on the precarious outcome of uncertain crops.

Krishna was clothed in a white dhoti, neatly folded about his middle; a loose-fitting canvas bazaar-made jacket completed his attire. On his head he wore the absurd round cloth cap, now unfortunately displacing the dignified pugaree in the south of India. His eyes were small and beady, never still. In short, Krishna was a typical casteman of the Gowdas of Northern Mysore—the inhabitants of the paddy lands that carpet the valleys running between the wooded hills of the jungle lands; a race of hard-working, frugal, simple natives, possessing not only the primitiveness of the up-country native, but a great amount of common sense, learnt in the rough school of the jungle edge, where in their fight for existence the Gowdas come very near to nature and her relentless laws. It is perhaps the proximity to the jungle atmosphere that gives to these Gowdas in their make-up a quality difficult if not impossible to define, but the direct result of the almost uncanny influences exercised by the jungle on all who live within her area, even those who have touched her borders, cannot truthfully deny feeling that mysterious 'something' by which the jungle either repels or attracts, but always disturbs.

The Gowdas in the northern talugs are the one caste indigenous to the country. The offspring of the original inhabitants of North Mysore, their numbers are so diminished by fever and famine that they are now far inferior numerically to the large floating population of the present day, of which the coolies from the Canara Coast who come up to the coffee estates form the greater part, and the Mohammedan traders and store-keepers a lesser. With conservative thoroughness, the Gowdas as a whole have kept their original rôle of agriculturists, seldom enriching themselves, but tenaciously holding their lands against the odds of chance made heavy by the elements. Being landowners even in a small way has produced in the caste a strain of proud independence which few except fighting castes possess; but they are in reality slaves to their swampy holdings, the majority in debt to moneylenders, who exact astonishingly high interest, which is only made possible by the Gowda's pride of possession, that goads him to work till he drops rather than sell his paddy-fields.

But to return to Krishna Gowda. He rose to take his leave as soon as I stopped winding up the gramophone. Before going he offered his services and knowledge of the surrounding jungles, should I wish at any time to beat, an offer I subsequently often availed myself of. He promised to let me know of any tiger in

the district, and would pray to his gods for my protection. With that he salaamed and walked away towards the coolie lines down to the river over which his house and paddy-fields were situated, leaving me watching the fire-flies darting among the branches of a clump of blue gums in the failing light of evening.

Gowdas, living as they do either on the jungle edge in the main valleys or by their paddy-fields in the areas of fertile land which cut into the hills like vivid green backwaters of a river, live, as I have said, a hard life, giving them, besides the cold, practical outlook common to all agriculturists, certain qualities generally attributed to dreamers and idealists, which allow their natural tendencies towards superstitious beliefs full scope. These superstitions handed down as legacies from father to son through the ages originated probably from some crude episode, and are kept alive by incidents occurring sufficiently frequently to convince these simple Gowdas that real grounds exist for their beliefs.

The Gowda caste has for the most part escaped the poison of the bazaars filtering into the lives of the youth of its community. Few of the sons of Gowdas leave their father's fields in preference for the life in an office in the atmosphere of villages and cities.

Krishna Gowda had all his sons at home. His daughters were already mothers of large families all within a day's journey of his home—wives of Gowdas.

On one of his visits to my bungalow to arrange the price of straw for my cart bulls, I happened to ask Krishna if he would get me a young monkey as a pet. He said he doubted if he could, and also said he would rather not. Thinking his objection might have something to do with the semi-conviction among Gowdas that monkeys harboured the souls of their ancestors and castemen, I asked him why, hoping to find out precisely what he thought about it. He was more lucid than I had hoped for.

'Sahib,' he said, 'I have seen you angry with the lazy among the coolies, also with John (my house boy) when he brought boots to the Sahib with the mud of yesterday yet on them. What kind of anger would be yours if a monkey I brought you hurt by biting? Perhaps the Sahib would shoot, even as he shot two pariah dogs that disturbed the seeds in this garden not many weeks ago. I do not wish that to happen, as the monkey might have a spirit of a Gowda.'

Then I asked him if he really thought he would become a

monkey when he died. His answer was non-committal. Perhaps he was shy of ridicule. He said 'I do not know. No one knows. If the gods answer my prayers they will let me stay near the jungle when I die. It may happen. My spirit may live as a monkey. Four years ago, Sahib, a son died during the rains. Whilst alive it was his custom at sundown to sit under an arecanut palm near the house, and drink milk to refresh him after his labour. After his death I have placed milk under that palm at every sundown, and sometimes a monkey comes and drinks.'

After this I tried to get him to be definite. But he would not say 'yes' or 'no,' and told me this story :

Many years ago the monsoon had failed, and what paddy-crop there was was very very small, and would barely cover the taxes and feed his family during the year. One day Krishna's brother, who lived at the northern end of the valley, came to Krishna and told him ruin was at hand, for that morning thousands of small grey parrots had entered the valley and had fallen upon the paddy-fields, eating every grain in a few hours, and that they were working southward down the valley ; before night they would reach Krishna's home. The parrots arrived in clouds.

'The noise of their wings,' said Krishna, 'was like that of swarms of mighty bees. They took to rest in the trees surrounding my paddy-fields, to await the dawn before destroying all I possessed. That night I could not sleep. I mingled my voice of sorrow with that of jackals on a distant hill, as I walked near about my home, like a madman tortured by many devils.

'Before the hour of dawn the trees suddenly became seized with great confusion, wherein rested the parrots. Cries of these birds made the hours of darkness terrible to endure. I fell upon my knees beneath a tree in vain trying to keep out the sound of a thousand voices by wrapping my combé about my head. Then I felt what I thought was leaves falling on and about me. Looking in amazement I saw like a monsoon rain grey feathers coming to the ground, making a white carpet in the darkness. Then, as suddenly, all was as silent as a jungle shadow, and feathers fell no more.

'Amazed, I waited for the dawn, understanding not all I had heard and seen in the hours of night. When the sun rose above the Eastern hills no destroying host of birds fell upon my crops. But everywhere in the branches bordering my fields were monkeys—countless in their thousands. Thus by their power was I saved,

thus were my crops kept from destruction. So, Sahib, perhaps monkeys are the friends of Gowdas by the reason that they were once, as I and my castemen.'

Whether this was a story handed down from father to son among the Gowdas, or whether it was an exaggeration, a lurid painting by Krishna's imaginative mind of the destruction of a few parrots by a gang of monkeys witnessed during his life, I don't know. I rather think the latter, as I have never found a Gowda who has heard the story other than relatives of Krishna, or those living in the same valley. I pointed out that monkeys were great thieves of paddy. Krishna neatly avoided a direct answer again, and said 'If monkeys take my crop they may have spirits of relations. And by the laws of caste I must feed those of my castemen who are hungry. Who knows, Sahib? We do not. But why should my fathers lie?'

One day I was returning from an inspection of a block of coffee by the road that ran near the river when I overtook Krishna Gowda. He told me he had been collecting land taxes among his castemen. This work was due to the fact that he was the 'Patel' of the district, a minor Government official of Mysore whose duty it is to collect certain taxes, report jungle fires, and see sandalwood trees are not cut down.

I happened to have my gun with me. As we were walking along the road a Brahman kite hovered over us. I at once raised my gun and got the kite in line with my sights. The Gowda implored me not to shoot, and was greatly relieved when I told him I had no cartridges.

'That, Sahib, is a Brahman kite. I am not of that caste. But they have great power and their curse is bad.'

He referred to the belief of many lower unenlightened natives that the Brahman is capable of inflicting upon those who displease them or violate regulations of Hinduism curses which outcaste the transgressors. This belief in their powers is energetically fostered by the Brahmans, who maintain their artificial superiority among their fellow-countrymen, and all privileges this superiority brings, by keeping up the age-old superstition that the 'Twice Borns' are more than men and have a close connexion with all Hindu gods and devils, though the present change creeping over India is making the Brahman's position rapidly of less importance,

since he is losing his hold on the masses as their fears of his supernatural powers decline.

The Brahman kite is small and white-headed, with white markings on its wings. It is on the back of one of these birds that the great God Krishna is supposed to have come to earth. In consequence, these birds are revered by the natives. Krishna Gowda eagerly told me the following story, as we continued homeward :

‘ Evil befalls those who destroy those birds. A friend, a neighbour, once shot such a bird. After he had shot he had his face upwards looking to see if he had killed. The kite fell dead full into his face. Its beak pierced one eye and a talon of one of its feet the other, and he was blinded. You may be wiser than I, Sahib, but I am old and have more fear. For I have seen.’

Krishna had again explained a superstition, employing an actual incident to try to convince me of its truth. But I am afraid I always shot kites irrespective of their kind, Brahman or otherwise, as kites were the birds that time after time destroyed the chicks that I had reared with difficulty and protected from the attacks of rats, and poisoning, resulting from my garden boy's belief that kerosene cured worms that were within them.

The Gowdas are far from thrifty. In good years of heavy crops they spend all they make, never looking ahead and saving for lean years and light monsoons. Sufferings in the past, however severe, are forgotten ; privation seems to teach the Gowda nothing—or, at least, it fails to make him guard against it.

Krishna had the caste failing of spending rashly, and borrowing when in need. During the last year that I knew him, his crops were taken to pay an old debt. Just before the ploughing started, tiger killed three of his best plough buffalo. These had to be replaced. But as his land had already been mortgaged, he could not raise a further loan on it. His stock of ready cash was very small. Krishna Gowda found ruin very near, indeed much nearer than it had ever been before. He had faced it several times during his life.

Then just as matters were coming to a head, luck favoured the old Gowda. Sheer luck ! But he said ‘ The gods were good to him.’

Krishna, as the Patel of the district, periodically wandered over the country-side noting the growth of sandalwood trees for



the authorities, reporting any that were cut down and those guilty of the offence. It so happened that Krishna passed on the boundary of Subiya Shetty's areca-nut garden, about sundown on the day before he was to sell two acres of his land to raise money for current expenses and interest due to a loan. Subiya Shetty, with his son, was in the act of cutting a sandalwood tree as Krishna passed near, unseen by them. One tree they had already felled. Krishna waited until the second tree came to the ground before he made his presence known. Subiya Shetty happened to be the moneylender from whom Krishna had borrowed. Without more ado Krishna suggested to Subiya that he should hand back his stamped debt papers plus five hundred rupees or be reported and fined for cutting down Government property. Subiya knew the fine for cutting sandalwood was six times heavier than the price Krishna demanded, and being a man of business instincts he agreed to Krishna's demand.

The next day Krishna came to me to tell me of his good fortune. With him he brought two of his sons, one carrying half a jungle sheep, the other a large bunch of bananas. Krishna himself brought eggs and a bottle of jungle honey. His joy knew no bounds. On no other occasion had I ever seen his old face so happy in expression. In a jumble of words he told the story: 'His lands were saved, he could buy more bulls, and perhaps a new sari for his wife.' After a lurid review of Subiya caste, he quieted down and listened patiently to my advice not to borrow from money-lenders in the bazaar again.

'Never, Sahib, never again to touch the money of the bazaar thieves. Whenever want comes again, Krishna Gowda will come to the Sahib for help.'

With that he left me, surrounded by the presents he had brought, and with a dread of the future should Krishna come to me for loans.

That night I could hear tom-toms beating over the river in the direction of Krishna's house, where doubtless all the Gowdas in the valley were feasting in honour of Krishna—and at his expense.

Two months before my friend Krishna died, he asked me to accompany him into the jungle on the west side of the river. 'There, Sahib, I can show you that which I do not understand. No other man knows of the place where we shall go. I only was

led by devils in my feet and fear to go alone, though I wish the Sahib should see this place.'

Krishna and I started early one Sunday morning for the 'strange abode of many,' as the Gowda called it. We walked for four hours, following a narrow game path through the hazy light of thick jungle. It was a part of the jungle I had never visited during many shooting trips. Until I entered it with Krishna I did not realise any of the country near my bungalow was so thick. Great jungle trees lined the path, their branches interlocked overhead, almost completely shutting out the sunlight which only penetrated the mass of leaves in weak thin rays every now and then.

Dense banks of flowering lantana, a mass of thorns, prevented us seeing more than a few yards into the jungle on either side. Sometimes we saw a single passion-flower, a veritable blaze of colour among the dull tones of the pervading green. Binder plants and creepers hung from the branches in erratic festoons; great Jack fruit looked like Chinese lanterns in the decoration of vines and kalia leaves.

Under foot the path was soft and slippery, being covered by several inches of rotting leaves. Occasionally, small streams trickled across the path; white jungle lilies grew near them in profusion, their coarse scent seemed very strong in the close atmosphere.

The further we went the thicker became the jungle. I noticed we had left the main path, and that Krishna was turning to left and right apparently at random, but in reality knowing the way among these paths as well as I knew the roads among the coffee fields. On passing a clump of golden bamboos a panther cat spat viciously from the centre. My hair, I think, stood on end, and I heartily wished I had something more than a stick in my hand. Krishna took no notice, and beyond starting to sing a monotonous song in Tulu within the limits of four notes, kept on walking as before, slashing with his cuttie at any twigs that happened to block our way.

Somewhere on our left I heard pig crashing through the undergrowth, startled by Krishna's voice. Shortly after this I insisted on sitting down on a fallen tree to rest. The heavy damp atmosphere had made me wet with perspiration, and being thirsty and tired my temper was not of the best. I told Krishna if he was leading me to see some ordinary devil stone belonging to some

enterprising coolies I would not go a step further. 'No, Sahib, those devil stones you have near your bungalow. This place you will wish to see again. And next time you will bring your black-machine [he referred to my camera]. But I shall not guide you.'

Having smoked a pipe I got up, and Krishna started to lead the way once more. Gnats were buzzing round our heads in clouds, while leeches were now enlarging themselves between my toes, having entered my boots by the lace holes; others clung round my knees like small bunches of grapes. My patience at an end, I was about to refuse to go on, and turn back, when Krishna suddenly stood aside and, pointing ahead, said 'Look—look well, Sahib.'

Looking straight ahead I saw that we were on the edge of a clearing about fifty yards square. The ground was irregular and carpeted by a thick growth of grass, a type of very fine manni, none of which we had passed on our way through the jungle. No evidence of tree stumps could I see in the clearing. Around, the jungle was as thick with growth as that which we had come through. I could see the sky above already assuming the pink light of sunset. Apart from the fact that the regularity of the clearing was unusual, I saw nothing of particular interest until Krishna pointed out the mounds covered with grass in the centre of the clearing. Then I noticed they were regular and long, arranged in a perfect circle, in the centre of which was a pile of grey stones. 'Are they graves?' I asked Krishna. But he only replied, 'Who knows?' Then picking up a stone he threw it at the centre pile. It had no sooner hit than a cobra's head shot up with its ugly hood extended. Hissing savagely and swaying slowly from side to side, it looked at us with its small cruel eyes.

It remained following every movement we made, until Krishna said that we should go as night was coming down. I can remember how thankful I was for the lantern he had brought and the relief I felt when I at last got back into the long-chair on my veranda.

After that day I often tried to get Krishna to take me again to that place. But he always refused. The offer of money availed nothing. Twice I tried to find it myself, but on both occasions I got lost. I could find no one among the natives in the district who knew of it, or had ever heard about it. One old Mohammedan storekeeper in the bazaar five miles away said he had heard an old Hindu temple existed many years ago in the district. But where, he did not know. And I rather think he had

never heard of any, but was merely trying to appear wiser than he was concerning the past history of the talug.

Krishna Gowda died shortly after this journey to the circle of jungle graves. I must admit since his death I have never had the pluck to shoot a monkey, as I always remember on occasions when I am about to take a shot what the old Gowda had said :

‘If the gods answer my prayers, they will let me stay near the jungle when I die. It may happen. My spirit may live as a monkey.’

And when I see a devil-tree it reminds me of the time when, standing watching coolies clear some virgin jungle, the old Gowda came up and said ‘Sahib, never put axe to a devil-tree. One day a pig may charge and you will leap behind such a tree, and the pig’s neck will be broken against the bark while you are safe.’

DENNY C. STOKES.

## THE CARDINAL DE RETZ.

BY MAURICE HEWLETT.

No student of France and literature can afford to neglect this gay and hardy little sinner, though the use of that very word might show that I was not fitted to expound him. It has here, however, an aesthetic significance and not an ethical. Poets and moralists have this in common, that, owing their power to the strength of their prejudice, they make bad historians. Carlyle, very much of a poet, illuminating his heroes with his own fire, did no harm to Cromwell, whose wart was a part of his glory; but Frederick the Great showed up oddly. The higher the light rayed upon him the more ghastly stared his gashes under the paint. Michelet was a good deal of a poet too, and rootedly a moralist. Naturally, he came to blows with the history of his country. The Fronde made him angry, the *grand siècle* shocked him. Edification may be served that way, not truth. It is, I grant, difficult to read the History of France as that of a sane, hard-working, penurious people; difficult to decide why the Revolution, instead of coming in 1789, did not come in 1689; or why, having begun in 1649, it did no more, as Bossuet said, than 'enfanter le siècle de Louis.' To understand that would be to understand the Fronde, but not how the state of things which evoked the Fronde and made possible the Memoirs of de Retz could have come about. A royal minority, a foreign Regent, a foreign Minister, and a feudal aristocracy will account for a good deal—not for all. The Italianisation of manners which began with the last Valois kings and was renewed by Henry's Florentine wife has to be reckoned up. To a nobility convinced of privilege it opened the ways of *Il Talento*.

*Il Talento* is the Italian description of the state of mind induced by desire and the means to gratify it on the spot. Iago is the standing type; but Caesar Borgia is a better. For him and his likes *The Prince* of Machiavelli was the golden book. In France the princely families—those of Lorraine, Bouillon, Condé and Savoie—found it a kindly soil; and one of its best products was naturally the Cardinal de Retz, whose Memoirs are as good as Dumas, very much like him, and the source of the best chapters of *Vingt Ans Après*. Here was *Il Talento* in fine flower, existing for its own sake; whereas Mazarin hid it in avarice, and Richelieu

had lost it in statecraft. You cannot read Retz with pleasure, to say nothing of profit, if you do not allow for the point of view—which you will have no difficulty in doing if you remember that, less than a hundred years before the Cardinal's day, his ancestor Alberto Gondi had been as familiar with the Ponte Vecchio as he himself was with the Pont-Neuf.

In his 'portrait' of Mazarin, Retz accused his brother-cardinal of common origin, but if you went back to his own family's beginnings I do not know that the Gondis were more than respectable according to French standards. But the future Cardinal, Jean François Paul, was born the son of a Duc de Retz, a great man of Brittany, was a Knight of Malta in the cradle, and when, later, it was thought well to make a Churchman of him, tumbled into abbacies as became a young prince, and had a bishopric as soon as he cared. He says of Mazarin's youth that it was shameful, that he was by bent and disposition a card-sharper. He might have said worse and not been wrong; yet the account he gives of himself is so frank, shameless and extremely flagrant that the reproof has an odd sound.

'I did not affect devotion,' he says of himself as Abbé, 'because I could never be sure that I should be able to keep up the cheat. But I had great consideration for the devout, and from their point of view that is in itself a mark of piety. I suited my pleasures to the rest of my habits. I could hardly get on without gallantry, but I continued it with Madame de Pommereux, young and a coquette, whose ways suited me because, as she had all the young people not only about her but in her confidence, her apparent affairs with them were a mask for mine with her.'

This equivocal conduct so far succeeded that the pious agreed with St. Vincent de Paul that, though the Abbé de Retz was not truly religious, he was 'not far from the Kingdom of Heaven'—quite as near, in fact, as the young gentleman desired to be. And then he tells a story which he thinks is to his credit:

'A short time after I left college my governor's valet, who was my humble servant, found living with a wretched pin-maker a niece of hers, fourteen years old and of remarkable beauty. After he had shown her to me, he bought her for 150 pistoles, took a little house for her at Issy, and put his sister in to look after her. I went there the day after she was installed, and found her extremely cast down, but attributing it to her modesty, was not at all surprised. She was still more so the next day, a fact about her even



more remarkable than her good looks, which is saying a great deal. She talked with me straight-forwardly, piously, without extravagance, and cried no more than she could possibly help. I saw that she was so much afraid of her aunt that I felt truly sorry for her, admired her disposition, and presently her virtue. I tested that so far as it could be done, and took shame to myself. I waited till it was dark, then put her into my coach and took her to my Aunt de Meignelais. She put the child into a convent of religious, where eight or ten years later she died in the odour of sanctity.'

One must not expect too much from a *grand seigneur* in a cassock. The story has more implication than he was able to perceive; but at least it shows that he had pity in him, if not piety.

In time he was appointed coadjutor to his uncle the Archbishop of Paris, with a promise of survivorship, and a fancy title of Archbishop of Corinth. He tells us that he took six days to consider how he should regulate his conduct, how restore the credit of the archiepiscopate (which was very necessary) without losing any of his pleasures. 'I decided to do evil with deliberation—no doubt the most criminal course in the eyes of God, but no doubt also the most discreet in those of the world.' In his opinion that was the only way open to him of avoiding 'the most dangerous *absurdity* which can be met with in the clerical profession, that of mixing sin and devotion.' 'Absurdity' is remarkable.

His first duty as coadjutor was a severe trial to his fortitude. It was necessary to make a Visitation of the Nuns of the Conception; and as the convent held eighty young ladies, 'of whom several were handsome and some adventurous,' he had many qualms about exposing his virtue to such a test. 'It had to be done, though; and I preserved it to the edification of my neighbour. I did not see the face of a single one, and never spoke to one unless her veil was down. This behaviour, which lasted six weeks, gave a wonderful lustre to my chastity. I believe, however, that the lessons which I received every evening from Madame de Pommereux strengthened it materially against the morrow.'

Such was the Coadjutor-Archbishop of Paris, and such his efforts to restore the credit of that see. He did not continue them long. Other things engrossed him, one being to obtain from Mazarin a recommendation to the Cardinalate, another by all, or any, means to obtain his benefactor's disgrace. Before the first could take effect or the second be effected the parliamentary Fronde began, and Retz was in it to the neck. What he wanted, except to enjoy himself, is not at all clear. He despised rather than hated

Mazarin ; he forsook the only man—Condé—for whom he seems to have had any real regard ; he invited his country's enemies to Paris ; and he got nothing out of it. But I am sure he enjoyed himself.

His strong card was his popularity with the Parisians. He earned that partly by hard money—the Barricades, he says, cost him some thirty-six thousand *écus*—and somewhat on his own account too. After he had been enthroned as Coadjutor, he gave himself no airs. On the contrary, 'Je donnai la main chez moi à tout le monde ; j'accompagnai tout le monde jusqu'au carrosse.' Then, when he was firmly established as the most affable *seigneur* in the city, suddenly he jumped in a claim for precedence before M. de Guise, and had it adjudged him. It enhanced his prestige incalculably. 'To condescend to the humble is the surest way of measuring yourself against the great' is the moral he draws, but another is that if you aim at popularity you should stand up to a great man, and beat him. Retz had courage, and the Parisians loved him for it. So did the Parisiennes, according to his own account, though many things were against him. He was an ugly little man, a little deformed, black man, Tallemant reports him, very near-sighted, badly made, clumsy with his hands, unable to fasten his clothes or put on his spurs. No matter. Whatever he could or could not do, there is no doubt he could give a good account of himself in the world, upstairs and downstairs and in my lady's chamber. Not only does he say so in *Memoirs*, written, as he is careful to say, for the instruction of Madame de Caumartin's children, but his enemies allowed it. It may even be that Mazarin paid him the compliment of being jealous of his midnight conferences with Anne of Austria ; at any rate Retz seriously thought of cutting him out. Then he was a good preacher, a ready debater, and a born lobbyist to whom intrigue was daily bread. Those were his cards for beggar-my-neighbour with Mazarin, and not bad ones. The weakness of the hand resided in the player. He had as little heart as conscience. He cared nothing for his country, for his friends or for his mistresses when their interests conflicted with what for the moment were his. If he had an affection for anyone it was for Condé. Yet he was against him all through, and chose rather to back the poor creature, Monsieur—to his own undoing, as he must have foreseen if he had given it a moment's thought. Gaston simply let in Mazarin again, through mere poltroonery ; and Mazarin once in, Retz must be out. And so he was.

The Fronde, the first Fronde, began seriously, like our Civil

War, on a question of principle. The Parlement of Paris took advantage of the Regency to restore its old claim to be more than a Court of Record. It claimed the right to examine edicts before registering them—in fact, to be a Parliament. Atop of that came the grievance of the Masters of Requests, who having paid heavily for their offices found their value substantially reduced by the creation of twelve new ones. The Masters struck, and their offices were sequestered. Then came the 26th August, 1648, when the Court, exalted by Condé's victory at Lens, first celebrated the occasion by *Te Deum* in Notre Dame, and immediately afterwards by causing Councillor Broussel, Father of the People, to be arrested and carried off to Saint-Germain. Retz, the coadjutor, was in both celebrations, as we can read in *Vingt Ans Après*. It was the day before the Barricades. Directly the news of the arrest became known the town, as he says, exploded like a bomb: 'The people rose; they ran, they shouted, they shut up their shops.' Retz went out in rochet and hood—to watch, no doubt, over the harvest of his 36,000 sown *écus*. 'No sooner was I in the Marché-Neuf than I was encompassed by masses of people who howled rather than shouted.' He extricated himself by comfortable words, and made his way to the Pont-Neuf, where he found the Maréchal de la Meilleraye, with the Guards, enduring as best he could showers of stones, but far from happy at the look of things. He urged Retz, who (though he had had an interchange of repartees with the Queen overnight) did not need much urging, to accompany him to the Palais-Royal and report. Off they went together, followed by a horde of people crying 'Broussel! Broussel!'

'We found the Queen in the great Cabinet with the Duc d'Orléans, Cardinal Mazarin, Duc de Longueville. . . . She received me neither well nor ill, being too proud and too hot to be ashamed of what she had said the night before. As for the Cardinal, he had not the decency to feel anything of that kind. Yet he did seem embarrassed, and pronounced to me a sort of rigmarole in which, though he did not venture to say so, he would have been relieved if I had found some new explanation of what had moved the Queen. I pretended to take in all that he was pleased to tell me, and answered him simply that I was come to report myself for duty, to receive the Queen's commands, and contribute everything that lay in my power towards peace and order. The Queen turned her head sharply as if to thank me; but I knew afterwards that she had noticed and taken badly my last phrase, innocent as it was and very much to the point from the lips of a Coadjutor of Paris.'

Then follows one of his famous Machiavellian aphorisms: '*But it is very true that with Princes it is as dangerous, almost as criminal, to be able to do good as to wish to do harm.*'

Retz might play the innocent, no one better, but neither Queen nor Minister was a fool. It is not to be supposed that they had heard nothing of his distribution of *écus*. Then the Maréchal grew angry, finding that the rioting was taken lightly, and said what he had seen. He called for Retz's testimony, and had it.

'The Cardinal smiled sourly, the Queen flew into a rage. . . . "There is a revolt even in the intention to revolt," she said. "These are the stories of people who desire revolt." The Cardinal, who saw in my face what I thought of such talk, put in a word, and in a soft voice replied to the Queen, "Would to God, Madame, that all the world spoke with the same sincerity as M. le Coadjuteur. He fears for his flock, for the city, for your Majesty's authority. I am persuaded that the danger is not so great as he believes; but scruple in such a matter is worthy of his religion." The Queen, understanding this jargon, immediately altered her tone, talked civilly, and was answered by me with great respect, and a face so smug that La Rivière whispered to Bautru. . . . "See what it is not to spend day and night in a place like this. The Coadjutor is a man of the world. He knows what he is about, and takes what she says for what it is worth."'

The whole scene, he says, was Comedy. 'I played the innocent, which I by no means was; the Cardinal the confident, though he had no confidence at all. The Queen pretended to drop honey though she had never been more choked with gall.' But what comedy there was was not there very long. The Queen, who had declared that she would strangle Broussel with her own hands sooner than release him, was to change her mind. La Meilleraye and Retz were sent out again to report, and La Meilleraye, losing his head, nearly lost his life. At the head of his cavalry he pushed out into the crowd, 'sword in hand, crying with all his might "Vive le Roi! Broussel at large!"' More people, naturally, saw him than could hear what he said. His sword had an offensive look; there was a cry to arms, and other swords were out besides his. The Maréchal killed a man with a pistol-shot, the crowd closed in upon him; he was saved by Retz, who himself escaped by the use of his wits. An apothecary's apprentice, he says, put a musket at his head.

'Although I did not know him from Adam I thought it better not to let him know that. On the contrary, "Ah, my poor lad," I said, "if your father were to see this!" He thought that I had

been his father's best friend, though in fact I had never seen his father, and asked me if I was the Coadjutor. When he understood that I was, he cried out "Vive le Coadjuteur!" and they all came crowding round me with the same cry.'

La Meilleraye knew very well what he had done. He said to Retz 'I am a fool, a brute—I have nearly ruined the State, and it is you that have saved it. Come, we will talk to the Queen like Frenchmen and men of worth.' So they did, but to no purpose. She believed that Retz was at the bottom of the whole *émeute*, and was not far wrong. But there was no stopping it now. The barricades were up at dawn the next morning, and it was clear that Broussel must be given back. He was. Then came the flight of the Court, which Dumas tells so admirably.

After the evasion of the royalties, the Fronde became largely comic opera. Certain of the princes—for reasons of their own—joined the popular party; Beaufort, le roi des Halles, who wanted the Admiralty; Bouillon, with claims upon his principality of Sedan; Conti, Elbeuf, Longueville. Retz had the idea of bringing their, and his, ladies into it. He himself fetched Mesdames de Longueville and de Bouillon with their children to the Hôtel de Ville, 'avec une espèce de triomphe.'

'The smallpox had spared Mme. de Longueville all her astounding beauty; Mme. de Bouillon's, though on the wane, was still remarkable. Now imagine, I beg you, those two upon the steps of the Hôtel de Ville, the handsomer in that they appeared to be in undress, though they were not at all so. Each held one of her children in her arms, as lovely as its mother. The Grève was full of people over the roofs of the houses. The men shouted their joy, the women wept for pity. I threw 500 pistoles out of the window of the Hôtel de Ville.'

After their debonair fashion these high people played at revolution. 'Then you might see the blue scarves of ladies mingling with steel cuirasses, hear violins in the halls of the Hôtel de Ville, and drums and trumpets in the Place—the sort of thing which you find more of in romance than elsewhere.' Nothing came of it all; a peace was patched up with the Parlement and each of the *grandeas* got something for himself, which had been his only reason for levying civil war. Beaufort was assured of his Admiralty, Longueville was made Viceroy of Normandy, Bouillon compensated for Sedan—and so on. La Rochefoucauld, too, who had taken up arms for the sake of Mme. de Longueville—

‘ Pour mériter son cœur, pour plaire à ses beaux yeux,  
J’ai fait la guerre aux rois ; je l’aurais fait aux dieux ’—

we must suppose that he also was rewarded. There is an interesting page in the ‘Memoirs of André d’Ormesson,’ one of an upright family of lawyers, which by stating the mere facts lets in the light upon the Fronde. All he does is to draw up a list of the *grands seigneurs* of 1648–55, with a statement of how often they changed sides in the seven years. It should be studied by all who wish to know how not to make civil war. But Retz too gives the spirit of the thing equally well. When his quarrel with Condé was coming to a head, and he was preparing, as he threatened, to push that prince off the pavement, he collected his friends about him, and among them two light-hearted marquises, Rouillac and Canillac. But when Canillac saw Rouillac he said to Retz ‘I came to you, Sir, to assure you of my services ; but it is not reasonable that the two greatest asses in the kingdom should be on the same side. So I am off to the Hôtel de Condé.’ And, he adds, you are to observe that he went there !

Retz alone, who, if he had been serious, might have been master of Paris, had nothing—except, of course, his Cardinal’s hat, which he would have had anyhow. The Court came back, Mazarin was forced out of France for a couple of years. But the Queen had him in again ; and then it was *his* turn. Retz was persuaded into the Louvre, immediately arrested and carried off to Vincennes. It was a shock to his vanity that the populace took it calmly. There were no barricades for him. From Vincennes he was presently removed to Nantes, whence, with the assistance of his friends, and I cannot but suspect the connivance of the governor, he escaped to the coast, landed at San Sebastian, was allowed to cross Spain and re-embark for Italy. He fetched up in Rome, where he remained for a year or two, taking part in conclaves and thoroughly enjoying himself. He spent large sums of money, which he did not possess, but never failed to receive from his friends. The French Ambassador and all the French clergy steadily cut him—but he did not take any notice. The Pope did, though, and Retz was given to understand that he had better remove himself. He went to Germany, to Switzerland, Holland, England in turn. Mazarin was dead and Charles II. restored by the time he came here. I don’t think that he did anything to the purpose with our Court, though no doubt Charles was glad of him. Neither Evelyn nor Pepys has anything to say about him ; and I fancy that he was only a passing guest. As soon



as he could he crept back to Court, to which he had already surrendered his coadjutorship. Louis employed him once or twice ; but his day was over. He lived mostly at Commercy, where he tried economy, and made periodical retreats, as La Rochefoucauld unkindly says, 'withdrawing himself from the Court which was withdrawing itself from him.' He was four million *livres* in debt, but managed to pay them off, and even to contemplate a snug residuary estate which he intended for Mme. de Grignan, Mme. de Sévigné's high-stomached daughter. But Mme. de Grignan snubbed him consistently and severely, and nothing came of it. He died in 1679, drained of his fiery juices, making a 'good end.' The stormy Coadjutor had become 'notre cher Cardinal.'

His Memoirs, taken on end, are wearisome, because endless intrigue, diamond-cut-diamond and chicanery are wearisome as well as intricate unless some discernible principle can be made out of them. It seems that Retz did nothing except talk—but, as Michelet points out, that was what France at large did when the Gascons were let into Paris with Henri IV. Read desultorily, they are delightful, witty, worldly-wise, untirably vivacious, thrilling and glittering like broken ice. His Machiavellisms are worth hunting out :

'The great inconvenience of civil war is that you must be more careful of what you ought not to tell your friends than of what you ought to do to your enemies.

'The most common source of disaster among men is that they are too much afraid of the present and not enough of the future.

'In dealing with princes it is as dangerous, if not as criminal, to be able to do good as to wish to do harm.

'One of Cardinal Mazarin's greatest faults was that he was never able to believe that anyone spoke to him with honest intention.'

When the Queen-Regent was working her hardest for Mazarin's return, she tried to win Retz over to help her. He told her bluntly that such a move would mean the ruin of the State. How so, she asked him, if Monsieur and M. le Prince should agree to it ? 'Because, Madam,' said Retz, 'Monsieur would never agree to it until the State was already in danger, and M. le Prince never, except to put it in danger.' Excellent, and quite true.

After Retz's death the Président Hénault, writing about his Memoirs, asked how one was to believe that a man would have the

courage, or the folly, to say worse things about himself than his greatest enemy could have said. The answer, of course, is that Retz had no suspicion that he was saying bad things about himself. He said a great deal that was not true. Other chronicles of the Fronde give detailed accounts of such days as that of the Barricades with not a word of the Coadjutor in them. But even if it had all been true it would have seemed a perfectly simple matter to him. If you have no moral sense the words 'good' and 'bad' have only a relative meaning. It is much harder to understand why he did the things which he relates, or why, if he did not do them, he said that he did. What was he trying to get done? Did he hate Mazarin? There is no evidence that he did anything more than despise him. La Rochefoucauld, whom he accuses, by the way, of having tried to assassinate him, explains him and his Memoirs alike by vanity. 'Far from declaring himself Mazarin's enemy in order to supplant him, his only aim was to seem formidable, and to indulge the foolish vanity of opposing him.' If Retz knew of that 'portrait'—and he did, because Mme. de Sévigné sent it him—his own more benevolent one of its author must be reckoned in his favour. He had written it in his Memoirs, but allowed it to stand there unaltered except for one little word. He had originally said that La Rochefoucauld was the most accomplished courtier and most honest man of his age. He scratched out the honesty.

Personally, I picture a happy *rencontre* in the Elysian Fields in or about 1679, when the Cardinal de Retz should have arrived and greeted his brother in the purple. A lifting of red hats, a pressing of hands—'Caro Signore, sta sempre bene?' and so on. There had been bitter war on earth; each was a keen blade, each an Italian. Each had had his triumphs. Retz had twice driven Mazarin out of Paris and once out of France. But Mazarin had proved the better stayer. He had returned, put Retz to flight, and died worth forty millions. Retz came back, made a good end, and only just cleared his debts. And what had it all been about? Some say Anne of Austria, an elderly, ill-tempered, fat woman; some say vanity, some ambition. I say *Il Talento* and the joy of battle: the brain taut, the eye alert, the sword-hand flickering like lightning on a summer night. Greek was meeting Greek. Inevitably that must have been. There was not room for two Italians of that stamp in France.

But let us always remember that he was mourned by Mme. de Sévigné, who said that he had been her friend for thirty years. There is the best thing to be known about him.

## LITERARY ACROSTICS.

THE Editor of the CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers prizes to the value of at least £3 to the most successful solvers of this series of four Literary Acrostics. There will also be consolation prizes, two or more in number: the winners of these will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. And, further, every month a similar prize of books will be awarded to the sender of the correct solution that is first opened.

## DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 8.

*(The Fourth of the Series.)*

'Sweets to the sweet.'

'The queen of curds and cream.'

1. 'As cowslip unto —— is,  
So seems she to the boy.'
2. 'A by-product of the singular chemistry of  
life, which only fools expected.'
3. 'He would beat a boy equally for not know-  
ing a thing, as for neglecting to know it.'
4. 'I am thirty years older. How could I ever  
hope to please such a sweet creature as  
that, with my rough ways and glum  
face?'
5. 'His mind was like sharpest steel that can  
touch nothing without cutting.'
6. 'The sweetest Christian soul alive.'
7. 'The total of the British loss was summed up  
to five thousand men killed and wounded,  
besides a floating balance of missing.'

Acrostic No. 6, 'Ralph Hatto': Correct answers were received from 116 solvers, and there were 39 partly correct answers. There was also one solution without a coupon, and two that did not conform to our very simple rules.

The monthly prize of books is won by 'Savage,' Mrs. Candy, Hillmore, Richmond Park Avenue, Bournemouth.

PROEM : Coleridge, *The Ancient Mariner*,  
Part 4.

## LIGHTS :

1. Macaulay, *Lays of Ancient Rome : The Battle of Lake Regillus*, xxxviii.
2. Longfellow, *Hiawatha*, viii.
3. Clough, *Dipsychus*, Part Two, Scene 9.
4. Dickens, *Dombey and Son*, ch. 14.
5. *Everyman*.
6. A. Dobson, *Tales in Rhyme : A Story from a Dictionary*.
7. R. Browning, *Home-thoughts from the Sea*.

## ANSWER TO No. 7.

1.	A	sylu	M
2.	N	ahm	A
3.	O	osmocrato	R
4.	I	cen	I
5.	E	veryma	N
6.	N	egativ	E
7.	T	rafalga	R

## RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed above 'Book Notes' on a later page.
4. At the foot of his answer every solver must write his pseudonym (consisting of one word), and nothing else. His name and address should be written at the back. It is unnecessary to copy the quotations or to send references; solvers who do so must not write them on the same paper as their answers.
5. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
6. Answers to Acrostic No. 8 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50A Albemarle Street, London, W. 1, and must arrive not later than October 20.

The third series of Literary Acrostics will begin in the next number of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

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